H. Zeller

Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee

of the

World Council of Churches

16 - 19 March 1999

Meeting held at the

Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Switzerland

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World Council of Churches

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, near Geneva,

16-19 March 1999

I. OPENING ACTIONS

A. Worship

Morning worship was led by members of the Executive Committee each morning in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. The order of worship was prepared by the WCC Worship Consultant, Rev. Terry MacArthur.

B. Call to Order and Welcome

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, called the meeting to order at 9.00 hrs on Tuesday 16 March 1999. He welcomed participants, many of whom were in Bossey for the first time. The full text of his remarks can be found in Appendix III of these minutes.:

Dr Heidi Hadsell, director of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, welcomed members of the Executive Committee on behalf of the Bossey staff. She hoped they would grow to know and love Bossey, which, as well as being a conference centre, was also a place for lay training and education, and hosted the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies each year from September to December.

C. Roll Call

This being the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee, Dr Best proposed that in place of the formal Roll Call, there be a session of **community building**. She invited members and staff to introduce themselves, mentioning points of particular interest about their experience and background.

The General Secretary completed the Roll Call by indicating apologies for absence from Vice-Moderator Ms Justice Sophia O.A. Adinyira and Ms Donnalie Edwards.

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the final meeting of the former Executive Committee held on 1-2 December 1998 in Harare, Zimbabwe, prior to the Eighth Assembly, were received.

A correction on page 6 of these minutes was noted: Fr Kishkovsky had spoken of "the 50th anniversary celebrations of the WCC which members of the previous Executive Committee had attended in Amsterdam on 19 September 1998. He had found this a moving and dignified and joyful occasion. In the symposium he had perceived a particular dynamic, a vision or image created by a Dutch speaker who had so movingly described the situation in Europe 50 years ago at the time of the formation of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948.

To be added: "The 'negative' aspect of the image drawn was the (probably unconscious) definition of 'Europe' in terms only of 'Western Europe'. Thus, the destroyed cities of Europe after World War II were London, Coventry, Rotterdam, Dresden, Berlin - but not also Warsaw, Minsk, Leningrad, Stalingrad. In today's Europe, clearly, the challenge for societies and for churches was to see Europe as a whole - Western, Central, and Eastern."

E. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

The general secretary introduced a revised draft agenda and timetable which, with a few changes, was **approved**.

F. General Orientation

Cluster Communication Officers Sara Speicher and Bob Scott, together with Kristine Greenaway, director of the Communication Cluster, gave a presentation to help members of the Executive Committee understand the new structure of the WCC. They gave an explanation of the new clusters and teams in which staff were currently working, and the implications of these for commissions, advisory groups, and other bodies to be elected by the Central Committee at its meeting in August/September 1999.

The major role of Central Committee was described as answering the question: What is the WCC going to do in terms of activities? while that of the Executive Committee was to deal with: How is the WCC going to carry out these activities and with what resources? Members of Commissions would be appointed by Central Committee and would report back to Central Committee through the Programme Committee. Advisory groups would be appointed by the Programme Committee.

2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dr Raiser began by announcing the news just received of the death of Bishop Okullu, Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Kisumu, Kenya, who had served for many years as a member of both the Executive and Central Committees.

The full text of the General Secretary's report is to be found in Appendix IV of these minutes.

In thanking the General Secretary for his report, the Moderator referred to issues to be faced at the beginning of this post-Harare period: the implementation of Harare decisions, and changes in the life of the Council, which led to a basic question about the nature of fellowship: What was meant by *being in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches*? What were the implications of this? Some of these issues would come up in more detail under different points of the agenda.

In the ensuing discussion, Fr Kishkovsky expressed appreciation for the way in which the general secretary had placed the current critical situation of the Council in the larger context of the difficulties and crises being faced by churches and ecumenical organisations in many parts of the world. This helped to gain an understanding of the depth of the crisis, but it was also reassuring to know that others were also facing a period of change, and of seeking new directions and patterns of life.

Bishop Young wondered how the prophetic profile of the Council would manifest itself in the new situation. Dr Kirkpatrick referred to the tension felt in Harare in relation to the idea of the Special Commission and the concept of a fellowship of churches. It was necessary to focus internally before focusing externally. Had any further reflection taken place on this? Bishop Huber was interested in Dr Raiser's renewed reference to ecumenical "space", and requested him to go into more detail on this concept.

Bishop Nifon had gained the impression that Dr Raiser spoke of "conciliarity" as something that was past and without relevance today. Or was he mistaken?

Bishop Zacharias affirmed the need for more discussion on the question of where the Council was going; to know this was essential if we were to move together and build together.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos was grateful to the general secretary for his ideas about the future of the ecumenical movement and of the WCC. He looked forward to hearing more about what the content of the relationship in the WCC would be, as well as the methodology; secondly he hoped to hear from members of the Executive what people

thought about the form of interpretation of the terminology used until now, as well as the methodology for what must be done in a common way. How could an understanding of the new structure of the WCC be gained, the new orientation that must be given to it in order to facilitate the participation of some churches which had problems about this, such as the Orthodox, also their difficulty in collaborating. With regard to the terminology of "fellowship", "koinonia" and "partnership" within WCC, he felt it was important to understand how these terms had been used during 50 years of ecumenical life and what meaning they could have in the future for both sides. Bishop Nifon had already made reference to "conciliarity" - another term which could create difficulties if its real meaning were not fully grasped.

With regard to programme and methodology, Metropolitan Chrysostomos was anxious to have some realistic proposals about how work was done both in the Council and in the churches, and how this new structure and new orientation of the WCC could be communicated to the churches, helping them find ways of staying together and working and living together.

Dr Masango also spoke of the need for the Council and the churches to stay together, to move together, to build together. But how could this make an impact at grassroots level, how could this have an impact on the world?

Archbishop Karim felt that individual churches could contribute through the WCC to the concept of moving together, widening the involvement of the churches in the ecumenical movement. The proposed Forum was another way of increasing such involvement.

For the Moderator, fellowship implied relationship, and attention had been given to this in the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) documents in terms of setting a framework and establishing programme priorities for the Council. There was a tendency to see "relationship" in the context of relationships between the Council and its member churches. But it was not a question of an organisation that related to churches - that was not the nature of the WCC. Rather, we were talking about church-church relations, how to promote inter-church relations, how to engage our churches in a process of being consciously aware that they are inter-related. That for him was the basic question. We must look at the Council as a fellowship, and at church-to-church relationships - this was an ecclesiological issue.

Responding to some of the points raised, the general secretary noted that further reference could be found with regard to terminology and methodology in some of the documents prepared for the Executive. Care had been taken to avoid overstepping the boundaries on issues of ecclesiology. But these questions had to be faced and would inevitably arise in the context of the work of the Special Commission with the Orthodox churches.

Regarding the prophetic profile of the Council, Dr Raiser believed the WCC had no way of escaping its prophetic ministry. But this could vary in content: sometimes it might mean taking a clear position in a conflict, to struggle within a conflict, or even to sharpen the conflict, but always struggling together towards a common goal. Through the Programme to Overcome Violence (POV), it was becoming clear that the issue of violence and resolving conflict was far more profound than the question of whether or not to use arms. It had to do with the way we perceive the world, the community and the social setting in which we live, even the church. And this must have implications for the way in which we talk about prophetic ministry.

The idea of ecumenical "space" related to a dimension of WCC work with uprooted people, migrants, refugees; also the idea of sanctuary where those who had no way of securing a safe place could find the necessary space - but the safe character of the space did not mean that it must become an enclosed space, but rather a place of "open safety". This understanding of security deserved some further reflection.

The reference to "conciliarity" was not intended to be understood as something from the past, although reflecting about conciliarity was one of the things that many had focused upon during the 1970s in the period up to Nairobi, and it was still of importance for our present situation. Dr Raiser was aware of the need for constant clarification about terminology but he felt it was important not to lose the central insights that had been gained in earlier years. Some of this had been too easily passed over by the "conciliar process", but in the present situation this could not be left aside.

3. EVALUATION OF THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

A. Evaluation by Executive Committee members

Dr Best introduced this session by inviting members of the Executive to give their own evaluations of the Harare Assembly, noting especially where they felt there could have been improvements or where things could have been done in a different way.

This was the fifth assembl Dr Tsetsis had attended - and was the smoothest and most disciplined. There had been no major crisis as some had feared; the Orthodox had made a significant contribution in spite of being represented in smaller numbers than in the past; in general conditions had been good, in spite of fears to the contrary. However he was aware that staff had endured very difficult conditions and he paid tribute to them for carrying out their tasks in a competent way in spite of the problems they had had to face

Several members pointed out that working conditions for Committees had been difficult - especially since those involved were supposed to eat lunch as well as do their work in a

limited time span. In some cases there had been some confusion about the scope and direction to be taken in their work.

Regret was expressed that the manifestation at the Rufaro stadium had not been a success, due to the lack of input from local people. More thought should be given in planning such an event in the future as to its usefulness both for delegates and for the people in the local churches. Dr Masango explained that some African delegates had tried to help the Zimbabwe churches with this event, but people in the churches were confused over the homosexuality issue and did not know how to deal with the dilemma between what the local churches understood and what the WCC was saying about the issue.

Many members indicated that worship played a central role for them, and the Opening and Closing worship and the Recommitment service were particularly memorable. Fellowship and relationships were extremely important.

Bishop Zacharias recalled the doubts with which many went to Harare, but he was happy that everything had gone so well. There was a good sense of community, of fellowship and oneness. Fr Kishkovsky also referred to the anxieties that many had felt beforehand, yet perhaps this had helped people act with an extreme sense of responsibility, and the assembly had been constructive and positive.

Dr Kirkpatrick also on behalf of his delegation expressed particular thanks to staff for pulling things together in a difficult environment. Hefelt there was a clearer sense of vision than in the past, with concentration on specific priorities.

Dr Tuwere found the visits to local churches of great significance; he had taken two crosses with him, one of which he had given to the Methodist Church in Harare, the second to a church leader in Germany during the Recommitment Service.

Several members felt that two more days would have given that much more time to allow for completion of the tasks, especially with regard to Committee work.

Many felt that the padares were good, but the choice was too wide and the locations were too spread out so that difficulty of access to some of the events meant attendance was very low.

Ms Lakawa appreciated the use of symbols in the Women's Festival, and the sense of being together as part of a fellowship was a real experience for her. Archbishop Karim had been a bible study group leader and found this time for reflection was helpful, although he would have preferred the groups to be larger.

Harare was Bishop Huber's first experience of an assembly, and he believed that not only he but others present had found it an opportunity to recommit themselves to the ecumenical movement. One of the problems related to the structure of the assembly meant that some people were not able to react in plenary to matters they found controversial. It was regrettable that the media reaction - especially in Germany - had been relatively minor compared to that of previous assemblies. He pointed to a number of questions which he believed the Executive should address seriously:
- What was the outcome of the assembly? Was there a prophetic voice?
- What would be the impact of the Forum proposal for the WCC?
- What was the real impact of the assembly theme for the assembly as a whole?

Ms Ogunsanya found Harare a wonderful experience. She had participated in the pre-Youth event, and had appreciated the orientation about assembly procedures. The "visible one-ness" of the body of Christ was apparent during the assembly; people acted together irrespective of their differences.

Ms Karagdag regretted that the spirit of the Decade Festival was not captured in the plenary on the Decade, partly because there were so many speeches. On the other hand she had appreciated the high level of discussion in plenaries, regional meetings, bible studies and padares, which showed that the ecumenical movement was responding to the vital issues of the day.

The Moderator felt the assembly should be seen as a great ecumenical event in the life of our churches. But how could it be translated into a quality of life on the local level, not just into programmes? What did the assembly say to the churches? What was its message? How could we take the assembly back home?` Attention should be given to that dimenison in the evaluation process. Central Committee members would be asked to bring evaluations from their churches and regions, setting the assembly in the broader context of our churches and not just as part of the institutional obligations of the WCC.

B. Presentation of Evaluation Reports

Ms Jean Stromberg, who had been responsible for the overall coordination of the Assembly, noted that the interim evaluation report shared with members of the Executive was not complete as only limited material had been available pending the arrival of the shipment from Harare. A fuller report would be shared with members of Central Committee.

One question that would require reflection prior to the Ninth Assembly was that of how assembly preparation should fit in with staff work, and at what point this preparation should begin. Although given plenty of time, many churches had not been able to provide details of their delegations by the time limit given, in which case preparations could have

been started at a later point. Although this assembly was shorter than any previous one, people became very tired. Many would have preferred an additional day or two but with some free time in the schedule.

Other questions to be noted included:
Should more emphasis be given to pre-assembly visits? What were the implications in terms of planning and budget?
How much preparation for Committee work should be done in advance by staff?
Would it be helpful to have guidelines as to what was expected of plenary sessions, in order to make them more creative?

Ms Greenaway spoke to a report on the **Communication** aspects of the assembly. She noted that word of mouth was the most powerful communication medium in terms of reporting. Stories that people took home would not only shape their own attitude but the attitudes of those who listened to what they had to say.

She also indicated a number of questions that would need some response:
How well had the assembly commmunicated? How could we interpret it and help the churches communicate with each other in order to bring life into the ecumenical experience within the churches?
How to react to the negative impressions created in some countries, such as in Germany? Dialogue was needed in order to correct such negative feelings.

C. "What has Harare asked us to do?"
Mr Lemopoulos referred to a staff paper entitled "What has Harare asked us to do?" (see Appendix V). The assembly spoke of "moving together" and "building together"; here staff spoke of "growing together". We had entered a post-assembly period marked by a new structure, and this required growing together.

Continuing with reflections about Harare, Ms Blyth noted that staff had been working on this for three months and they had come to a point where they were looking to the Executive Committee to help them to get a synthesis to enable them to move together in one direction. How would it be possible in seven years' time to measure the deepening fellowship? How would it be possible to describe the way this had been done? It was important to avoid compartmentalising things as had been done in the past. As leader of the cluster on Relationships, she had to keep aware of Issues and Themes, just as Sam Kobia in talking about Issues and Themes must also speak about Relationships. They were pioneering a way of doing things which would make a difference to how the Council did its work; it was about the environment, the culture, the ethic in which we were trying to do what we had been called to do together.

Moving together and building together were very important - but difficult to achieve. The pioneering ideal should be the characteristic of the Council and the ecumenical movement in the coming period. The search for a new way of doing things was based on the goal of building something new, and of finding overarching themes for all our work.

Mr Kobia affirmed the intention to see relational work and programmatic activities as part of the same task. Whatever was done must be related to the member churches, to grassroots organisations, to networks in the constituency. And we must avoid duplicating things that were being done elsewhere. Much of what the Council had done, the tools it had used in the past, were no longer relevant. A broad new framework was needed to enable us to find new ways of analysing, of enhancing the ecumenical memory in such a way that we do not repeat what has been done before. The padare was a new methodology; the challenge was to try and find a way of balancing the method against the content.

The general secretary asked members whether they shared the understanding set out in the paper with regard to the overarching foci that the Council should concentrate on. Was anything essential missing? Was the balance of emphasis of these concerns correct, recognising that we were only at the beginning and more detailed work still had to be done?

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:
- the paper was helpful but there was no reference to the priority to be given to work on human rights issues, diakonia, advocacy;
- did the conceptual framework set out in the paper and the three themes of *Globalisation, Being Church, and Caring for Life*, really correspond to the main themes raised in Harare?
- the diaconal dimension of the Council's work should be more clearly spelled out, since it had been one of the major tasks of the Council since 1948;
- more emphasis should be given to spirituality and theological reflection in the ecclesiological sense, as requested by the Orthodox;
- in its efforts to move and build together, the Council should not lose sight of the need to give some leadership: togetherness and leadership were not incompatible. Leadership must be given in a way that helps everyone to act together;
- some expressions (such as inclusive community) were difficult to understand, especially for the Orthodox; What is ecclesiology? What is church in the contemporary world?
- we should study some of the methodologies used by the churches rather than inventing new ones;
- for many churches which have less chance for involvement in the ecumenical movement, the new paradigm of fellowship, of moving and growing together, was of

great importance. Inspired by CUV and the realisation of new directions in the ecumenical movement, the churches were keen to participate more actively in it, while at the same time expecting a lot from the Council;
- if the Council were to be successful in developing the new model of a Forum, this would affect the churches and encourage ecumenism. How could this new working style help to get more people interested in participating in the ecumenical movement? If we did not convey this new working style to the member churches, we would not proceed further;
- how to maintain a balance between what the church is and what the church should become?

Responding, the general secretary said he was grateful for the discussion which had helped him realise the difficulties of finding language that communicated what was intended. Trying to pull together different elements from the assembly was not traditional language; many of the traditional themes - mission, diakonia and service, the nature of the church - were not mentioned as it was taken for granted that the Council would continue to be present in these areas. But it was clear that, if these issues were not specifically mentioned, there was a tendency to assume that they were no longer of concern.

The question was: could the term *ecclesiology* be used in a less traditional way? This example demonstrated the difficulty of any attempt to identify foci that reflect a temporary state of the ecumenical discussion while remaining aware that it stands in a broad tradition. Many were still learning because they came from a different tradition in which the WCC set the agenda and the churches responded. To think from the other way was revolutionary, and to combine it with the expectation that there be a clear profile of leadership, made the task more difficult.

Fr Kishkovsky raised a concern felt by many of the Orthodox: the fundamental ecclesiological language about church must be found in a precise way in the work of Faith and Order. It was therefore important to make sure that Faith and Order work did not remain marginal to the public considerations of the Council. Even though many were aware of the theological work done by Faith and Order, unless a way could be found to bring that work into public view as part of the Council's activity, the shortness of the ecumenical memory would lead to this work being largely unknown. The Moderator noted the tension here between preserving the specific identity of Faith and Order and ensuring that Faith and Order become a visible part of the life and witness of WCC.

D. Comprehensive Perspective on Relationships

Rev. Myra Blyth spoke of where the different teams were going in the perspective of Relationships. The Programme Guidelines Committee had proposed several challenges

coming from CUV, including:
- what was the quality of the relationship we currently enjoy and how could we deepen it?
- in any particular partnership, how could we find language that would make our understanding and vision accessible and inspiring?
- our language tended to be difficult for others to follow, so how could we become more intelligible to those who want to understand what we were about?
- were we using language in a way that was accessible?
- could we find language that would make intelligible what we believe to be the movement of the spirit?

In addition to these challenges, staff had beene asked to intensify their efforts
- to strengthen the relationship between the member churches (cf.the Special Commission);
- to establish relationships with other partners in the ecumenical movement;
- with regard to Christian World Communions, there had been a long relationship, but a new one was beginning because of their interest in the Forum proposal;
- with ecumenical organisations, entering a process of intensifying the depth of that discussion;
- with ecumenical development agencies.

Ms Blyth asked members for their advice and support in connection with a number of issues of concern to the Ecumenical Relations and Inter-Religious Relations teams.

E. Comprehensive Perspective on WCC Responsiveness to Issues

Rev. Samuel Kobia, director of the Cluster on Issues and Themes, gave a comprehensive picture of the priorities for the work of this cluster. He pointed to some themes which would require inter-cluster cooperation, including the Programme to Overcome Violence (POV), the Debt issue, and Globalisation. Follow-up on the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women would be carried out, responding to the recommendations adopted by the Assembly. Another Decade might have to be foreseen to deal with the concern of women for bringing the churches to action. The next stage would consider the emphases to be placed on issues such as economc exclusion of women, violence against women, racism and xenophobia - all matters that threatened the unity of the churches when women's issues were addressed, often due to church structures that remained rooted in the past but which needed to change if we were to be faithful to the findings of the Decade.

Five main programmatic implications came from the Assembly: 1) women in ministry; 2) models of a new community, models of a new church; 3) violence against women - the theological challenge; 4) women, worship and spirituality; 5) women in theology. All the

teams would be involved in this work, with the Women's team playing a coordinating role.

Another proposal coming from Harare was to launch a Decade to Overcome Violence, 2001-2010. This would coincide with the UN Decade for war children, and for building a culture of peace. The recommendation from the PGC was that the WCC work with the churches to create a culture of non-violence, working with various partners to develop approaches for just peace-making. Much was already being done by churches and peace movements, and a network had been set up. The aim of the Decade would be stimulate churches and groups at every level, to make this a liberating process: a new style of work in which the Council would create the environment and link up those already involved in this work.

Regarding methodology, much had been learned from the visitation programme "Living Letters" during the Decade of Women, as well as from the Theology of Life process. A letter would be sent to the member churches, requesting them to share any work they were doing on overcoming violence and building a culture of peace. Ideas and methodologies being used by various partners would be synthesised.

Regarding the **Africa Challenge**, Mr Kobia gave a detailed survey of the present situation in the continent, offering some responses to the question, **What did Harare ask us to do on Africa?** The assembly had adopted several recommendations on Africa, including an instruction to carry forward the work already started through the Reconstructing Africa Programme. Overall objectives of this programme included listening to the voices of the churches and peoples; promoting a culture of life and peace with justice on which should be based the quest for just, participatory and sustainable societies; and enhancing the fulfilment of human dignity in Africa and the affirmation of the African identity.

Tasks should include seeking viable alternatives for living based on the African concept of community; discerning the Church's mission in peace-making, conflict prevention and management, and reconciliation at community and national levels; equipping people with relevant social, political and economic literacy; analysing and examining traditional African ways of governance with a view to popularising them and contributing to the enhancement of human dignity; identifying and facilitating initiatives of the people in developing a peace agenda and establishing peace constituencies in their respective communities; promoting national, regional and pan-African cooperation in the search for peace and sustainable development; enhancing the churches' contribution to democracy building.

Various methodologies could be employed, such as dialogue with African society;

reflection on past and current developments in Africa, especially on national and regional perspectives; gathering information to enable African churches and social groups to learn about the situations in their respective countries and regions; re-examination of the eventual role of the churches, the ecumenical movement at large and of the NCCs, the AACC and WCC in particular in support of African struggles for peace, justice and sustainable communities.

Active solidarity with Africa was essential, in order to identify ways of developing and/or stimulating new forms of solidarity between the churches and peoples of each region with the ecumenical family and the international community at large; facilitating ecumenical visits as part of an integrated mutual learning process for confidence building and community empowerment; stimulating the work on a new ecumenical vision and agenda for reconstructing Africa as an integrated part of humanity at large; and encouraging the movement of ideas and people in support of the efforts of Africans towards life with dignity and for the creation of sustainable communities.

Further reflections were necessary in order to inform the process and content in preparation for Central Committee. **Conceptual work** was needed to provide the broad framework for programmatic work, including some understanding of African experience and history. This framework could include the following elements:

a) **the search for a new vision**: - African renaissance, reconstruction of Africa, communitarianism;
b) **consensus building and legitimacy**: - legitimacy of the nation state, legitimacy of "liberation" struggles, legitimacy of other forms of social intervention;
c) **life with dignity in sustainable communities** - caring for life as an overarching focus: the senseless loss of lives in Africa today through conflicts and other forms of violence prevalent; the challenge of HIV/AIDS;
b) **legacy** of domination, the struggle for self determination for human dignity;
e) **identities and security** - De-construction and Reconstruction: initiatives at regionalisation were indicative of the perceived flaws of the nation state model; they also suggested a strong desire to transcend geographical boundaries to achieve certain social, cultural and economic interests.

In discussion, Bishop Young, referring to his own experience living in Angola, stressed the need for a sense of urgency in addressing the apparent willingness to allow war and carnage in many countries of Africa. He felt the situation should receive the same kind of global attention currently being given to Kosovo.

Mr Lee underlined the importance of the Council's work on the issue of debt cancellation and globalisation, and asked how these issues would be pursued. Dr Masango felt that

an analysis of economic exploitation might be done. Those living in the midst of these difficult economic situations had no opportunity to explore how these economic injustices come to pass. People needed to be aware how injustice can destroy their faith.

The general secretary pointed out that a considerable amount of work had already been done on the debt issue, including an analysis of what the churches were doing. The Council's role was to strengthen and empower the churches to continue the work they were already engaged in. The task now was to study what the assembly had said, in particular the report of PRCII which pointed to a number of basic questions regarding the economic order that went beyond debt cancellation. Work must be done on such issues which were not being dealt with through the debt-cancellation campaigns.

These items were referred to the Programme Sub-committee, with a request for advice on how to go about developing further the items mentioned orally. (See **Reporting on the Eighth Assembly**, p.31-ff).

4. SPECIAL COMMISSION

Mr Lemopoulos presented a paper giving an update on the situation relating to the Special Commission (SC), reminding members that the appointment of such a Commission had been approved by the assembly. Its main characteristic would be that of member churches discussing together about the World Council.

The Ecumenical Patriarch, H.H. Bartholomew, had kindly accepted the invitation of the General Secretary to coordinate the nomination process on behalf of the Eastern Orthodox churches, and H.H. Aram I had kindly accepted to coordinate the nomination process for the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

A list of 30 names had been proposed for the non-Orthodox membership of the SC, which included church leaders, theologians, persons with ecumenical memory, and persons with experience in Orthodox relations. In addition to approving the appointment of these persons, the Executive was asked to appoint a small preparatory group which would meet prior to the Central Committee to prepare suggestions for the agenda, working style, and so on. It was essential that this information be shared with the Central Committee.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos reported on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate about the procedure being used to nominate members from the Eastern Orthodox churches. From the Orthodox side also, seven members would be invited to form a group to work with the seven non-Orthodox members in preparing for the work of the full Commission.

The document was referred to the Programme Sub-committee and the Nominations Sub-committee for study and recommendations.

At a later session, Dr Best reported on behalf of the Programme Sub-committee.

In discussion, Fr Kishkovsky welcomed the proposal that conversations should be planned with the Orthodox churches. Perhaps it would also be useful to put considerations and issues related to the SC into the general flow of contacts of the Council with the member churches, not only the Orthodox. This might be a different emphasis, but the task of the SC was a task of the whole World Council involving the whole fellowship.

The general secretary affirmed that the Council was constantly engaged in visits and contacts with the member churches. Clearly there was a special need to overcome blockages of communication with the Orthodox churches and communication with them was significantly greater than with other member churches. Fr Kishkovsky agreed, but pointed out that in the North American context there was little knowledge of the issues involved.

Mr Lemopoulos referred to ongoing efforts by staff in preparing material, giving particular consideration to the issues involved in the Special Commission. An issue of *The Ecumenical Review* would be devoted to the concerns of the Commision.

Bishop Nifon suggested that it would be helpful if staff were to visit some Orthodox churches in order to explain the concerns through direct dialogue. It was felt that the Council should play a constructive role in helping Orthodox churches understand what the issues were, since there was a lack of information and knowledge and a process must be found to assist them.

On recommendation of the Programme Sub-committee, the Executive Committee

> ***encouraged*** *the General Secretary to inform the churches about the decisions taken by the Executive Committee with regard to the Special Commission, and to facilitate the meeting of a preparatory group before the Central Committee meeting in August;*
>
> ***agreed*** *to the emerging calendar and expressed the hope that the preparatory group would further elaborate it, fixing the dates of the first plenary meetings, shaping the agenda, and giving thought to possible methodologies for its work;*

invited *staff to take initiatives in organizing visits to Orthodox churches or to use the opportunity of already planned meetings, in order to pave the way for the work of the Special Commission;*

endorsed *the efforts of staff to encourage a sustained reflection process around the issues raised (some of which were included in document 5.1 of the December 1998 meeting of the Executive), and* ***urged*** *them to include considerations and issues related to the Special Commission in the flow of information/communication with all member churches.*

(For the report of the Nominations Sub-committee on the appointment of members of the Special Commission, see p .40).

5. PROPOSAL REGARDING FORUM OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

Mr van Beek introduced a document setting out what had been done to follow up on the Bossey consultation of August 1998:

1. The proposal from the Bossey consultation had been sent to all participants together with a memorandum summarising the decisions taken. Participants had been asked to encourage the governing bodies of their organisations or churches to formulate a first response.

Responses had been received so far from a) the World Alliance of Reformed Churches stating their basic support, and 2) the recommendation from the Harare Assembly. World Vision International had declared its interest in the Forum.

A list of ecumenical partners not represented at Bossey had been established for approval by the Continuation Committee. The proposal together with a letter on behalf of the Continuation Committee had been sent to these partners, asking for responses.
The list included NCCs in association with the WCC; REOs; CWCs; International Ecumenical Organisations recognised by the Central Committee; the World Evangelical Fellowship; the World Pentecostal Congress; the Organisation of African Instituted Churches.

2. Next steps:
- A letter would be sent from the Team on Church and Ecumenical Relations to WCC member churches, referring to the assembly's action regarding the Forum proposal and asking for further input/comments from the churches;

- The working group of the Conference of CWC general secretaries had requested a meeting in May to discuss the Forum proposal; members of the Continuation Committee living in or near Geneva would be invited to be present;
- A meeting of the Continuation Committee was planned for later in 1999 to consider responses received and perhaps to plan the convocation of an organizing committee later in the year, in line with the actions of the Bossey consultation;
- A report would be brought to Central Committee in August/September regarding responses received from member churches, and on the work of the Continuation Committee.

In response to a question as to whether the Roman Catholic Church had responded, Mr van Beek said they had been consulted early on and showed interest in being involved in the discussion. They had been waiting for the response of the Harare Assembly before determining their response. This had not yet been received but a number of changes were currently taking place in the PCPCU which may have delayed their decision.

The general secretary recalled that the Policy Reference Committee had encouraged Central Committee to continue the process of exploration with regard to the Forum. This involved carrying forward the process envisaged by the Bossey consultation, leading to a debate in the Central Committee in August.

The Moderator felt that the Council should not make any formal commitment to the Forum, although it was in principle committed to the idea.

The general secretary underlined that the essential issue was for the Council to seek all possible ways to intensify its cooperative relationships with the groups of partners it already knew. The PRC had drawn attention to the fact that among the CWCs there were some who had a particular ecclesial/ecclesiological self-understanding in terms of a world-wide communion of churches. While the Council had the Forum on its agenda, it must make every effort to strengthen links with other partners quite apart from the Forum question. The idea was to try and bring the links in which the Council was engaged into a more comprehensive framework. If it turned out not to be viable, then we should recognise the fact.

Bishop Huber was grateful for the clarification that the assembly approved the exploration of the Forum idea rather than its implementation at this stage. It would be important to make this clear to Central Committee that the decision was open. The question then was the deepening and widening of our fellowship, of our community - only that could be the subject of such a Forum.

The matter was referred to the Programme Sub-committee for consideration and action.

At a later session, Dr Best presented the report of the Sub-committee with regard to the Forum proposal. On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee

> ***received*** *with appreciation a report (see above) updating the situation with regard to the Forum proposal, noting especially the information about what had been done so far. Discussion in plenary and in the Sub-committee clearly indicated that it was extremely important on the one hand to continuously explain the intention which led to the idea of the Forum (second part of Article III of the WCC Constitution), and on the other to be aware of the fact that the assembly encouraged Central Committee to continue the process of exploration in consultation with various bodies which had expressed interest in the Forum;*
>
> ***encouraged*** *staff to proceed with the next steps as proposed, focussing on asking for further input/comments from the churches, and on further discussions with the working group of the Conference of General Secretaries of CWCs and participation in the meeting of their Coordination Committee;*
>
> ***welcomed*** *the idea of bringing a report to the August meeting of Central Committee on further responses received from member churches and on the work of the Continuation Committee.*

6. CHANGES TO THE RULES

The General Secretary reminded the Executive that the Assembly had rejected the proposed amendment relating to the election of Presidents; delegates had expressed the wish to retain the power to elect the presidents themselves rather than handing the task to the Central Committee.

Several other proposed changes in Rules I and V had however been accepted and these had duly been incorporated. The text of the Rules as revised would go for final confirmation to Central Committee. Some minor consequent changes had been made in the Constitution in accordance with the decisions of the Assembly.

Responding to a question regarding the role of the presidents, the general secretary said they were no longer *ex officio* members of the Executive (which had been re-identified as a supervisory, management-related body) as their role was not primarily a management one but one of interpreting and representing the WCC. They were however *ex officio* members of Central Committee. The Officers had considered the presidents' participation and were proposing that they be invited to sit with the Executive when it

met prior to a CC meeting.If they wished to attend a meeting of the Executive, they would or course have the right to do so.

7. MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Mr van Beek introduced a paper dealing with issues of membership, and describing the situation with regard to pending and new applications.

The main points were the following:

A. The Issue of Membership

In 1994-1995 a Sub-committee of Central Committee had conducted a review of the criteria for membership, which resulted in substantive changes in Rule I on Membership of the Council and the insertion of a new Rule XIV. The Sub-committee had also drafted a document on the Meaning of Membership which was received by Central Committee in 1996 and incorporated into the CUV document (§37.1-9). The review touched on some of the basic theological and ecclesiological aspects of membership but did not study these questions in depth.

While it might be expected that the Special Commission would discuss membership as part of its agenda, it would seem desirable at this stage in the Council's history and in light of CUV to initiate an overall study on the issue. A proposal to this effect could be brought to the Central Committee in August/September, setting out the inter-connection between such a study and the work of the Special Commission.

B. Pending and new applications

There were currently some 25 pending applications for membership, as well as a number of inquiries. Some ten to twelve of these were sufficiently advanced to bring the application to the Executive and Central Committee in August/September for decision. The limiting factor was the number of visits that could be made in the coming six months. Most of these applications would appear to satisfy the criteria for membership as presently stated in the Constitution and Rules.

When the Executive Committee decided in 1996 to suspend the reception of new member churches until after the Eighth Assembly (with the exception of those to be received at the Assembly) it had done so in view of CUV and the reflection on the meaning of membership. The report of Policy Reference Committee I made it clear that these concerns would continue to require major attention in the post-assembly period.

In addition, it was likely that the question of the ever-increasing number of Protestant, or

'non-Orthodox', member churches would be an element in the work of the Special Commission. If during its 3-year term the Central Committee continued to receive new churches into membership, this may be perceived by some as a lack of sensitivity.

Proposed options for consideration:

a) *to proceed with the applications as in the past;*

b) *to decide that at this first Central Committee after the Assembly no membership applications be presented* (with the exception of the case of the Celestial Church of Christ). This could be justified by the agenda of this meeting: working out the results of Harare, CUV, the Special Commission etc. The processing of the applications (completion of the files, visits etc) could continue normally;

c) *to extend the suspension of applications for membership for a period of three years*, i.e. until the work of the Special Commission was completed (also with the exception of the case of the Celestial Church of Christ), and to discontinue the processing of the applications.

Any policy decision, whether to proceed or to extend the period of suspension, would need to be carefully stated and communicated.

C. Celestial Church of Christ, Nigeria

The Assembly had referred this case to the Central Committee. Further discussion with the leadership of the Celestial Church of Christ could be held in May or June. Two letters had been received raising questions about the church. It might therefore be good to have further consultation also with the member churches and the Christian Council in Nigeria.

A number of points were raised for clarification, and others were noted for further reflection, including the following:

- Was "membership" as currently understood the best way to relate within the ecumenical family, or should a new way of participation be found?
- The issues should be discussed in the Special Commission but also in Central Committee, keeping aware that each church on the list of applications had expectations with regard to membership in the Council;
- Particular attention should be given in communicating with the churches whose applications were pending, to avoid giving any false impression.

The issue was referred to the Nominations Sub-committee for detailed consideration and proposals for action.

D. At a later session, Dr Kirkpatrick presented the report of the Nominations Sub-committee as follows:

1) *STUDY ON MEMBERSHIP*

The Sub-committee proposed, and the Executive Committee **agreed**,

*to **note** the proposal for a comprehensive study on membership but to **wait** with a decision until the Special Commission had been established and had outlined its agenda and future work. When there was more clarity as to how the Special Commission would approach the issue of membership, the Executive Committee could reconsider the proposal, taking into account also the possible participation of non-member churches in such a study.*

2) *APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP*

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:

a) *that no applications for membership be brought to Central Committee at its meeting in August-September 1999;*
b) *that current and possible new applications be carefully processed according to the existing criteria and procedures for eventual submission to Central Committee at its following meeting, i.e. in 2001;*
c) *that work on membership applications be regularly reported on to the Executive Committee for information and advice.*

In making this recommendation the Executive Committee noted that the Central Committee would receive an interim report on the work of the Special Commission at its meeting in 2001, which would enable it to consider the admission of new member churches in the context of this process.

3) *CELESTIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, NIGERIA*

After careful consideration of the application of the Celestial Church of Christ, the Sub-committee came to the conclusion that it would be wise to allow sufficient time for visiting the Church and for further consultation with the Christian Council of Nigeria, the Christian Association of Nigeria and the member churches in the country.

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**,

that another visit be organised at an appropriate time and that a recommendation for decision be brought to the Central Committee at its meeting in 2001, at the same time as other applications. The delegation should include representation from the Orthodox and African constituencies of the WCC.

8. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

A. Schedule of meetings and venues:
The General Secretary explained the tradition that the schedule of annual meetings be broken once between assemblies, giving a three-year period with only one Central Committee meeting. This provided for a longer period for programmes to develop without the need to report back. It was therefore proposed that, after the meeting in 1999, the first period of 18 months be entered upon, with the next Central Committee meeting taking place in January 2001, and after a further 18 months, the following meeting would be in August/September 2002.

Reasons for this proposal included the fact that the year 2000 was already so overcharged with meetings that it would be preferable to avoid the holding of yet another one. Secondly, in the year 2002, the Central Committee must elect a new general secretary. Thirdly, the period from CC 1999 to 2001 would be a 3-year cycle, while the meeting in 2002 would provide opportunity for a mid-term evaluation, initiating the second 3-year cycle up to 2005. Such a longer-term planning perspective would facilitate work with partner agencies which had for some time been seeking such a change in the Council's planning and budgeting cycles. (See p. 53 for agreed dates).

The Central Committee normally held its meetings in Geneva, mainly for financial reasons. It could only meet elsewhere if the host churches were in a position to cover the costs of staff travel and accommodation. Invitations for the Executive Committee to meet elsewhere than Geneva would be welcomed, as these more easily offered opportunity for strengthening relationships with churches in other parts of the world.

B. The future shape of the Central Committee
Referring to the history and background of the Central Committee, the general secretary introduced a paper, noting that in earlier years, Central Committee had had a deliberative function around a central theme. Committees met in conjunction with but prior to Central Committee and only reported to it, being more or less autonomous.

With the introduction of the Unit system, the Central Committee became the policy-making body, with the Unit Committees being the permanent reference committees. The most intensive working period became the days when the Unit Committees were meeting, their task being to formulate recommendations on which Central Committee could act.

The present intention was that the Central Committee assume a deliberative role once more, making it a place where information about important developments in the fellowship of churches and in the ecumenical life of the member churches could be shared and their implications for the work of the Council could be considered.

The Finance Committee normally met prior to CC to prepare the preliminary report to Central Committee. The Programme Committee would also normally meet prior to CC; some of its members would shape their initial report to CC while others would attend the Executive. In addition, there would be two reference committees to deal with other matters.

For 1999, the General Secretary suggested that the Executive present a memorandum setting out its understanding of the new priorities, shape and function of Central Committee. A draft could be shared with the Executive meeting prior to CC, or the Officers could be asked to finalise it for mailing to CC members. Sufficient time would be provided in the programme for CC members to get to know the new structure. They would receive an evaluation of the Harare Assembly and have opportunity to voice their own assessments and echoes from their churches.

If the proposal for a regional focus were accepted, it was suggested that Africa continue to be the focus following on the assembly.

In 1999 the Programme Committee would not have had time to meet prior to CC and would have to be given opportunity during the course of the Central Committee meeting to consider the proposed framework for the next three years.

Responding to a question, Dr Raiser explained that, as vice-moderator, Dr Marion Best would be moderator of the Programme Sub-committee of the Executive; she would also be a member of the Programme Committee of CC. The task of Central Committee was to set policy, that is, decide what the Council should do in terms of programmes, while that of the Executive was to decide how best to implement these programmes and with what resources.

The matter was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Dr Best presented the Sub-committee's report and recommendations:

The Sub-committee had had an extensive discussion on the future shape of the Central Committee. Before voting on the recommendations, the Executive took up two main points:

- Regarding the proposed **regional focus** on Africa, several members, while in general agreement, also spoke of the importance of other regions whose development have global implications - the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific, Eastern and Central Europe.

Speaking of Europe, DrTsetsis felt that a regional focus on Eastern Europe would help

the process of the Special Commission. A major part of the problems from member churches of that area was due to the fact that churches - Orthodox or not - felt that the WCC did not pay adequate attention to the spiritual and material needs of these churches after the fall of communism. Our work depended a lot on a correct objective assessment of this part of Europe. He suggested that Eastern Europe be the focus in 2001.

In response, Dr Raiser informed the Executive that a modest start had been made to engage in a process with others to assess again the role which the WCC played in relating to churches in countries formerly under communist rule. Appeals had been made to the Council to confess its failures. It was felt that it would not be feasible nor appropriate for the Council to initiate a process of study, recognising that this was a very complex issue requiring careful assessment of evidence and testimonies of persons involved. The Council consistently said it was prepared to contribute to a process, and has made its archives available to those interested in serious research. Studies were gradually being published and the process would continue.

In addition, steps had been taken to initiate a process of building a network of persons engaged in research, not only with regard to the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Out of this network-building and preliminary consultations, a first larger meeting was planned to take place in May. It was hoped that this would be a first stage of a continuing process - a new working style facilitating processes in which the main actors were not WCC people. This could become part of an important preparatory process with a regional focus on Eastern and Central Europe.

- The Moderator felt that the work of the **Programme Committee** needed more clarity: how would it work, and what should our expectations be?

Dr Raiser mentioned the "small group" of members of the Programme Committee that was to be proposed for appointment: this body should give shape to the input to Central Committee regarding programme discussions, but it should also consider what would be the appropriate procedures for the Programme Committee to respond to the expectations being addressed to it through the clusters. It would be helpful to start the work of the Programme Committee with a clear proposal as to how it was to work. The outcome of the work of this small group of the Programme Committee would come to the Executive at its meeting prior to CC.

The Executive Committee VOTED in favour of the following recommendations of the Programme Sub-committee, the Executive Committee:

a) ***reaffirmed*** *the intention of the constitutional changes to make the Central Committee a deliberative body, relieving it of administrative tasks and making*

it a place where information about developments in the fellowship of churches and in the life of member churches were shared, while their implications for the work of the Council were considered;

b) ***encouraged*** *the efforts to shape the future meetings of Central Committee by*
- addressing during each meeting one or several thematic issues requiring ecumenical reflection;
- inviting members of Central Committee from a given region to present a profile of ecumenism in their region and raise issues which should inform the activities of the council;
- finding ways to engage ecumenical partner organisations (in particular CWCs and REOs) in an exchange with Central Committee about ecumenical perspectives and closer collaboration;

c) ***suggested*** *that, in the light of the above, the possibility of assigning reference committees be explored with the aim of drawing together discussions in groups or in plenary.*

More concretely and with regard to some elements for the agenda of the first meeting of the Central Committee (26 August - 3 September 1999), the Sub-committee offered the following suggestions:

1) First session on opening day: *Orientation*. It was proposed that this session begin with the opportunity for guided introductions where both continuing and new members get to know each other in this new structure. It would be the time when members could learn about the structures and working style of the WCC, in preparation for active and informed participation in the work of the Central Committee. It was further proposed that a background document be mailed to the members of Central Committee in advance.

2) Second session on first day: *Opening actions.* It was proposed that there be small group discussion of the Moderator's and General Secretary's reports. Response from these groups could be referred to a reference committee which would compile and present these responses to the plenary.

3) Throughout the week of the Central Committee meeting: It would be helpful to model our new understanding of how the WCC works by making opportunities available for member churches to share information about their context and work. A number of ideas were suggested which included building this into worship, padare style experiences, and the creation of regional "spaces" where member churches share information about themselves.

4) With regard to the regional focus for this meeting, Africa was strongly recommended. It was however important to avoid any impression that a notion of "hierarchy" of

priorities had led to this choice. A clear perspective given to the regional presentation could allow that emerging regional concerns were related to other regions too and space be provided for other regions to discuss the same issues from their own perspective.

5) Final day: *Planning for continuation.* This would allow members to focus on preparing plans for sharing information about the WCC and what happened during the Central Committee meeting when they go home. Such a process would allow members to learn from each other's communication plans. It would also allow staff to see what needed to be done and produced to assist members in their interpretative work. Further it would provide a framework for continuity and accountability if the opening session of the following Executive Committee and Central Committee meetings were to include a time for reporting back on these activities. It was suggested that to aid this continuation work, members be paired and asked to contact each other at regular intervals to share how their work of interpretation was proceeding.

6) It was hoped that staff would be able to interact with Central Committee members in order to ensure mutual understanding and a context for accountability for the work of enabling the three-year plan which would be discussed, developed and endorsed at this meeting of the Central Committee.

7) Members of the Programme Sub-Committee offered creative suggestions for the working style of the Central Committee. Perhaps it would be possible to explore ways of engaging some members of the Sub-Committee in a consultative process which would take advantage of their interest. Ways could possibly be explored of inviting them into conversation by using e-mail and the Web.

9. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps presented his report giving an update on the various situations of conflict around the world in the period since Harare. As the document had been circulated in advance, some further updating was necessary. No action by the Executive Committee was proposed at this meeting.

A. Follow-up of actions by the Eighth Assembly

1) French nuclear testing: Following the appeal by the Evangelical Church in French Polynesia for the release of classified files related to the health and environmental effects of nuclear testing in the Pacific, a special hearing had been organised on the premises of the French National Assembly in Paris. The hearing was chaired by John Doom, WCC Secretary for the Pacific region, and was addressed by newly-elected WCC president, Bishop Jabez Bryce. The hearing provided an unprecedented opportunity for people from

the Pacific to voice their demands. Surprisingly, among the several hundred persons in attendance were citizens of metropolitan France who used the occasion to issue their own complaints of non-cooperation by the French Government with their own efforts to obtain the health and other records of family members diagnosed with radiation-related diseases after exposure either during research or during testing phases of nuclear weapons development.

The letter on this subject addressed to the Prime Minister of France by thbe Offices from the Assembly in Harare had not yet been given a response..

Dr Tuwere was grateful for the action taken by the Council, but pointed out that at issue was not just the effects of nuclear testing, but the wider issue of decolonisation. Had this question been taken up as well?

Mr Epps responded that the Council had been an active advocate for many years of the rights of Pacific people to self-determination, especially the exercise of this right by original inhabitants of the French Overseas Territories of New Caledonia and Tahiti. While the case had developed in a positive direction for the former territory, progress was painfully slow with respect to French Polynesia..

2) Indonesia: In response to the request of the Assembly, a nine-member joint WCC-CCA delegation made a pastoral visit to Indonesia, 27 January - 4 February 1999. A printed report was shared with members of the Executive[1]. Since then another outbreak of religious violence had taken place in Ambon, an area where until recently inter-religious relations had been constructive. The General Secretary had written to the President reminding him of the commitments he had made to the delegation with regard to protection of people against violence exercised by security forces.

Ms Lakawa noted that the violence was continuing in the region of Ambon and was having an effect also in Jakarta, stirring the conflict between Christians and Muslims; these tensions were being used by the political leaders. Christians felt increasingly marginalised, and were growing more aware that they were a minority. The media was biased in its reporting of the situation in Ambon.

Dr Raiser said that one of the encouraging findings of the team visit was the fact that the churches were themselves responding; also, the Chinese minority were becoming aware of their own need to become politically engaged. Ultimately the means for overcoming the situation must come from inside the country - it could not be done from outside.

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1. Copies of this report are available from the International Relations Office of the WCC

Mr Epps noted that a representative from the churches in Irian Jaya would be in Geneva to present their concerns to the meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights in March.

Questions of religious intolerance had become especially sensitive and difficult since some political forces tended to exaggerate and exploit persecution of Christians in a way which often aggravated tensions and limited the possibility of inter-religious dialogue.

B. Follow-up of concerns raised during the Assembly

3) Religious tensions in India: Staff continued to follow the situation. Following the Assembly, many acts of violence broke out and many religious workers were murdered. In February 1999 the general secretary sent a letter of support to a national meeting of Protestant, Evangelical and Roman Catholic church leaders held in North India.

Bishop Zacharias stated that the situation had improved during the past two months. Both the President and the Prime Minister had condemned the religious intolerance, especially the killing of missionaries from Australia. The year 2000 had been declared "Christ Year", and the churches were organising prayer meetings. The media was siding with the Christians.

4) Child Soldiers: The Assembly statement had been widely circulated and appreciated. A visit to the WCC by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Children in Conflict gave opportunity to work out ways of cooperation with his office.

5) Jerusalem: Follow-up to the Assembly statement had been made and indications had been received that it was warmly welcomed in the region as well as by Foreign Ministries of some European Governments. A visit to the WCC was expected shortly from representatives of the Palestinian Authority to look at actions that might be taken in relation to this statement.

6) African conflicts: Reference was made to the report on Africa given by Sam Kobia. Mr Epps noted that while there were many reasons for the generalised crisis in Africa, nearly all the current conflicts were aggravated by the growing flow of arms and mercenaries into the continent.

Deep concern had been expressed by Assembly delegates from the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and the **Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)**, who asked for support in addressing the conflicts in this region. Especially serious were the increasing tendencies to engage in ethnic cleansing, and the absence of information and international concern about the rapidly deteriorating situation. Staff facilitated a visit to Europe of the newly-elected president of the Evangelical Church in Congo to raise awareness, renew

ecumenical contacts and help devise plans for coordinated emergency response and international advocacy for peace.

In response to a request from churches in Congo-Brazzaville, the general secretary addressed a letter to the President of France, recalling the country's historical ties with Congo-Brazzaville and urging him to bring this case onto the international agenda. A similar letter was addressed to the UN Secretary-General offering support for his efforts to urge Security Council action. These letters were shared with church and agency partners for follow-up in their own countries. Plans were being developed for an ecumenical delegation to visit Brazzaville.

A staff task force drawn from several teams continued to monitor and coordinate response to the needs of the **Great Lakes Region**. A new Fellowship of Christian Churches and Councils was formally constituted in Nairobi in early March 1999, providing an important forum for mutual support and information sharing.

The consequences of the Rwandan genocide continued to disturb the region as a whole and to have implications well beyond. While the WCC has sought to assist the churches in the process of confession, forgiveness and social reconciliation, progress was slow. Of particular concern to the churches and ecumenical bodies around the world were the allegations of direct involvement by a number of Rwandan church leaders, some of whom remained in the country while many more were in exile elsewhere in Africa, Europe and North America.

Mr Gadegaard asked whether there were plans about how to react if the accusations that church leaders were involved in the genocide were true. Mr Epps said that information would be made provided about what the Council had done in relation to the situation immediately before and after the genocide. Five months afterwards, the WCC had called together heads of mission agencies and churches which had historical relationships with the churches in Rwanda to discuss allegations of complicity, to give partner churches the opportunity to consult on how these questions were to be dealt with. But these were questions for civil and church courts which had to assume responsibility.

The Assembly had also devoted much attention to the **Sudan**. A further meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Sudan Ecumenical Forum was held in early March 1999, to develop a long-range plan of advocacy action for presentation to a full meeting of the Forum scheduled for late May/early June. A number of significant efforts leading to peace and reconciliation were taking place.

The tensions in **Zimbabwe** heightened in January with the arrests of journalists and the editor of the *Standard,* which had published a report of an attempted military coup.

Allegations by the journalists that they had been tortured during detention increased fears of repression. Three Supreme Court judges wrote to the President challenging the illegal action taken by the military and calling for the immediate release of the journalists. The President responded by asking the judges to resign. This action led to student demonstrations.

Staff kept in touch with the churches and the ZCC during this period. Failing a lead from their side, a brief press comment was issued by the WCC expressing concern about the implications of this affair and its possible portent for Zimbabwean society.

The border dispute between ***Eritrea and Ethiopia*** disintegrated before the Assembly into military confrontation in spite of the efforts of the international community and ecumenical partners to resolve the issues peacefully. A mediation effort by Norwegian Church Aid had revealed how tightly bound the religious groups of the two countries were with the position of their respective governments. The WCC, in collaboration with AACC, LWF and other ecumenical partners, continued to monitor developments and seek practical ways to assist.

In discussion, the Moderator asked why a body like Norwegian Church Aid had asserted such a strong unilateral mediating role. He felt this was an area for AACC, LWF and Oriental Orthodox involvement, but not for a European body. Mr Daba however felt that Norwegian Church Aid had made a helpful contribution and were to be thanked rather than criticised for their efforts. Mr Gadegaard pointed out that Norwegian Church Aid had the trust of churches on both sides of the conflict and had been asked to intervene. But the Moderator did not feel it was appropriate to establish a bilateral relationship of this kind, thereby bypassing regional and confessional structures.

C. Other Actions

*7) **Iraq***: A statement had been issued condemning the attacks by US and UK forces against Iraq. The subsequent attacks by US air forces on suspected military sites located in the "exclusion zones" were of continuing concern. These had now become routine and were carried out with impunity.

With the abduction of Kurdish leader Ocalan and his return to Turkey, there had been a massive outbreak of demonstrations and acts of violence throughout Europe and elsewhere. A group of Kurds came to the Ecumenical Centre and talked with the General Secretary, and were grateful to be received in an understanding way. They were given facilities to make a statement to the press, and the Council issued a short statement expressing concern about the treatment of Mr Ocalan.

*8) **Colombia***: There had been hopeful signals of progress in the peace process in

Colombia, but there had also been a new wave of crime and human rights violations by paramilitary groups, as well as the humanitarian disaster created by the earthquake. The churches had responded rapidly to the latter, and other developments were being followed closely.

9) Guatemala: Efforts were being made to ensure that Guatemala not be dropped from the international agenda once the Human Rights delegation left the country. This would be among the issues addresssed at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in April.

10) Small arms and light weapons: The WCC had taken a leadership role in the formation of an International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), and organised ecumenical strategy consultations in Norway and in Rio de Janeiro to coordinate efforts for churches' participation in this new global initiative. The Council had also hosted an organisational meeting of the Reference Committee of IANSA, and would continue to be closely involved.

10. REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE

(*Note*: The report and recommendations on the Special Commission can be found on p.15-16; those on the Forum Proposal on p.18, and those on The Future Shape of the Central Committee on pp.23-26 of these minutes).

A. Reporting on the Eighth Assembly

Dr Best, reporting on behalf of the Programme Sub-committee, said that the three documents giving the first detailed evaluations of the assembly, together with the plenary discussion and some written contributions from members of the Executive, had provided the basis for the Sub-committee's discussions on the Eighth Assembly.

Before acting on the recommendations, the Executive continued its discussions. Several items were noted for further discussion in the Central Committee:

- **Length of the Assembly**: If the assembly were lengthened, it was likely to limit the attendance, especially of lay people who were often not in a position to free themselves for a longer period. No definite proposal should be made yet, rather leaving the matter open for discussion on whether to lengthen it, or consider alternatives that would make the programme less full.

- Efforts should be made to ensure a greater involvement of the **laity**.

- Further discussion was required on how the assembly arrived at decisions, since the present rules of debate, based on western reformed parliamentary tradition, no longer fitted the present day context..

Regret was expressed that no video had been available for delegates as they left Harare. The general secretary said this had been a result of an unfortunate failure in implementing plans on the part of staff. Efforts were being made to rectify the situation.

At the suggestion of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed** to put forward the following points to the Central Committee for further consideration. Each recommendation was followed by a brief paragraph noting the points of the discussion.

1. That consideration be given to lengthening the Ninth Assembly to at least 13 or 14 days, and that every effort be made to ensure that the design of the flow of the programme would allow for adequate rest for participants and for contact with the local context.

The Sub-committee felt that the Harare programme was too full, with inadequate time for participants to rest or for contacts with the local context.

2. That more attention (time and budget) should be given during the preparation of the Ninth Assembly to facilitating team visits and to regional and sub-regional meetings in order to promote fellowship among the churches, to broaden and deepen the impact on local churches and to encourage more adequate preparation of delegates and delegations.

The Sub-committee affirmed these methodologies as important expressions of CUV and as especially necessary for the tasks of nominations, of enabling collaborative efforts on major issues and of increased involvement of local churches.

3a. That, in so far as possible, major issues for the Ninth Assembly be selected and prepared in advance in a consultative process and the documents sent to delegates and member churches in advance.

3b. That a first and second reading for each of the major issues be scheduled so that committees may incorporate written responses to the document and allow more plenary time for the discussion of significant and difficult issues.

The Sub-committee recognized that though the model used by Policy Reference I and Public Issues may not be applicable to the presentation of all issues, it nevertheless urged all possible advance

consultative work on documents so that delegates have in hand the major papers, in all languages. A first reading should happen early in the assembly so that the committee has the advantage of a first round of plenary comments for its work.

4. That reading of speeches and documents should be avoided in plenary sessions as much as possible and that more time be given to plenary discussions.

The Sub-committee recognized that sometimes it was unavoidable to read documents (i.e. when a document was not available in all languages or was of a technical or sensitive nature) but this should be avoided as much as possible by the method suggested above of prior preparation, or by the model of the Theme plenary, where there was careful coordination and strictly limited time. Presentations which were printed in full should be spoken to in an abbreviated way. As the plenary was the only place where many delegates had an opportunity to make their voice heard in the assembly and to feel that they were really taking part, increased time for plenary discussions needed to be built into the programme. Accepting only about one third of those requesting to speak in each plenary was too discouraging for the delegates who would like to participate.

5a. That the Programme Committee establish clear criteria for the evaluation of the work of the World Council over the next period and that this be used in the evaluative process for the next assembly.

5b. That the presentation of the review of the work engage the plenary as a whole in the next assembly.

The Sub-committee expressed the hope that the new integrated approach of the work of the Council would make it possible to present to the plenary an integrated presentation in a plenary session, allowing the assembly to fulfil its task of review and evaluation.

6. That the idea of the Padare be given expression in future assemblies, with attention to the number of offerings, space limitations and foci of issues.

The Sub-committee agreed that the Padare had provided important space for the churches to share their experiences and to dialogue with others, even though there were many suggestions for refining and improving. An important distinction between dialogue and lobbying

needed to be at the forefront of future invitations to this open space.

7a. That communication of the next assembly ensure coverage in the assembly newspaper and in the press releases which present all the significant issues of the assembly in a balanced way.

7b. That video materials be prepared quickly, in cooperation with the Education team, to be available to the churches and constituents as a way of communicating the WCC using the materials gathered at the assembly.

There was concern that not all issues were presented in their entirety, that some perspectives or aspects of stories were missing. A thorough review of the coverage of the assembly would be useful with a concern to find new approaches to working with both church and secular media.

The Sub-committee expressed regret that a short video with the highlights of the assembly was not available in January/February. It was probably too late at this stage to use that approach, but future assemblies should produce such a video as quickly as possible.

The visual materials gathered in Harare, however, should, as quickly as possible, be made available to the constituents in a helpful, educative form. Concern was expressed that the opening worship broadcast video eliminated much that would have been of importance to the churches.

The sub-committee had discussion with Communication Cluster staff about coverage of the Assembly in the worldwide media. Staff noted that they were currently trying to analyze the articles that had already been gathered and were evaluating appropriate and effective ways of responding. They also expressed the need to find the financial and staff resources to engage in a process of gathering "clippings" from electronic and print media to broaden the sample of worldwide coverage and allow further analysis.

For the presentation of the Assembly Report to the Central Committee, the Sub-committee suggested:

a) that a summary of the full report be also prepared;
b) that ways be explored to combine the presentation of the report with a video clip (approx. 20 min), followed by discussion **or** with a panel presentation (of 5-6 persons), again followed by discussion;
c) that the general secretary solicit members of Central Committee for reports from their churches.

B. "What has Harare asked us to do?"

The general secretary explained that there was a distinction between ongoing activities and specific foci which were recognised as priorities for a limited period. In addition there were certain ongoing responsibilities which the Council had to respond to. The new staff teams had been formed around issues which were deemed to be ongoing areas of concern. Each had a section of its work which was part of its core mandate. From this the intentional foci must be distinguished to which priority attention would be given across teams, drawing on the resources of several teams.

The three overarching foci were meant to suggest three such areas, reflecting emphases that the Programme Guidelines Committee (PGC) had wanted to see expressed in the future programme of the Council. These were not programmes as such - there would be no programme on globalisation, for example. Rather they were meant as frameworks that could be sharpened to the extent that they help us to make choices between various specific projects being suggested. They may not all qualify for immediate implementation, either due to lack of financial resources or insufficient preparation of the cooperative framework within which they were to be carried out; in such cases they may have to be postponed or referred to other partners.

This attempt to concentrate on three foci had encouraged the staff teams to begin to see their work in inter-relationship. The proposals would go to Central Committee which would have the task of setting the priorities.

Bishop Huber felt there was a certain imbalance in the three foci: the first - Globalisation - was programmatic, a challenge in our present situation. The other two - Caring for Life, and Being the Church - referred rather to a Christian intention with which we appraise the situation. He suggested that the first could be reformulated as "responsibility for the one globe". Dr Best agreed that "globalisation" did sound like a programme. Another suggestion was to replace it with the phrase "Ecumenical response to Globalisation". Mr Lee was concerned about the same point and suggested "culture of peace and life" in place of "caring for life". The wording "Being Church" was not focused so the meaning was unclear. Perhaps it would be better to focus on the inclusive church.

Dr Raiser was grateful for these efforts to sharpen the foci. He was aware that work still had to be done on the language, spelling things out in terms of strategic planning.

Reporting on behalf of the Programme Sub-committee, Dr Best said that members had expressed appreciation for the paper "What has Harare asked us to do?" (see appendix V) which constituted an attempt by staff to interpret the assembly and to respond to the call of the Programme Guidelines Committee for an "overarching conceptual framework" for shaping and interpreting the post-assembly agenda;

The Sub-committee considered this document to be an important interpretative framework which at the same time displayed the significance and the potential impact of the interaction between the teams in developing new methodologies and looking for coherence in their activities (to give a few examples: the areas of advocacy, theology of life, Programme to Overcome Violence, children, climate change, could be mentioned).

The Sub-committee felt the document was quite comprehensive. It should, however, be read against the background of the ongoing activities of the Council (which were not explicitly mentioned), together with the general secretary's report to the Executive, as they complemented one another.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee:

a) ***affirmed*** *the three generic concerns suggested by the document (fellowship, responsiveness to ecumenical issues, and effective working methodologies) and encouraged staff to continue exploring them;*

b) ***welcomed*** *the placing of Article III of the constitution in the heart of this document, and invited staff to use Article III as an entry point to unfold and explain the intentions of the CUV;*

c) ***expressed appreciation*** *for the effort to elaborate and propose three possible overarching foci (globalisation, caring for life, and being the church), and endorsed these three foci for the future work of the Council;*

d) ***encouraged*** *staff to continue their effort in shaping and interpreting the post-assembly agenda, to make the next step by thinking in terms of strategic planning, and to begin preparing a three year plan in view of the Central Committee meeting;*

e) ***asked*** *the staff to share the results of their work with the "small working group" of the Programme Committee.*

Dr Best noted that the Sub-committee wished to add the following additional recommendation which the Executive Committee endorsed:

the Committee expressed appreciation
- for the work of staff who, under difficult circumstances, had made the Assembly run so smoothly;
- for the ways in which staff were responding to new ways of working;
- for the interest staff had shown in meeting with members of the governing bodies.

11. REPORT OF STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

In a closed session, Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick, acting moderator of the Staffing Sub-committee, presented the report of the Sub-committee as follows:

A. Staffing Matters

1. The Sub-committee took note of the **Staffing Procedures for Grades 7-10** approved by the Central Committee in August 1992 (Minutes 1992, Appendix IV, pp.149-154).

The general secretary pointed out that some adaptation of these procedures to the new structure would be required; the matter would be brought back to the Sub-committee at a subsequent meeting.

2. **Staffing Report**

The Executive Committee **authorised** the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointment and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions:

I APPOINTMENT

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Justice, Peace, Creation

- **Rev. Eugenio Poma Añaguaya** (Bolivia, Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia), as Executive Secretary for Indigenous Peoples' Issues, for three years from 1 March 1999 (will complete 7 years' service).

The general secretary drew attention to the significance of this appointment. The WCC had for many years tried to give attention to the concerns of indigenous people. Four years ago an indigenous person had been appointed as a consultant, to explore the feasibility of establishing this as a permanent position in the Council in the team on Justice, Peace and Creation. The consultancy had been a success and had elicited a positive response among indigenous populations. It was thus appropriate to recognise this response by making the consultancy into a normal staff position, thereby expressing a development in the area of racism, ethnicity and indigenous persons.

II CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Education and Ecumenical Formation

- **Rev. Simon Oxley** (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain), Executive Secretary for Education, for three years from 1 May 2000 (will complete 7 years' service)

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies: Team on International Relations

- **Rev. Dwain Epps** (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]), Executive Secretary, Public Issues/International Affairs, for 3 years 1 month from 1 August 2000 (until retirement) (will complete 11 years 8 months' service)

III VACANCIES

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies: Team on Regional Relations

- Executive Secretary for Asia

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Justice, Peace, Creation

- Executive Secretary, Peace Concerns

Information on these vacancies would be sent to member churches and members of Central Committee with the general secretary's letter following this meeting of the Executive. Members were asked to urge persons they knew who had the necessary qualifications to apply for these positions. It was hoped that the appointments could be made at its August meeting.

The Executive Committee **authorised** the Officers to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

IV INFORMATION

1) Arrivals

It was reported that the following staff members had taken up, or would shortly take up, their positions with the World Council of Churches:

General Secretariat - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

- **Rev. Dr Faitala Talapusi** (Western Samoa, Congregational Christian Church in Samoa) as Executive Secretary/Lecturer on 1 May 1999

Cluster on Communication

- **Ms Kristine Greenaway** (Canada, The United Church of Canada) as Director on 1 January 1999

Team on Public Information

- **Ms Karin Achtelstetter** (FRG, Lutheran) as Media Relations Officer on 1 March 1999
- **Rev. Bob Scott** (Aotearoa-New Zealand, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia) previously Executive Secretary, Racial Justice, as Communication Officer on 1 January 1999
- **Ms Sara Speicher** (USA, Church of the Brethren) previously seconded staff, as Communication Officer on 1 January 1999

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Mission and Evangelism

- **Dr Manoj Kurian** (Malaysia, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church) as

Executive Secretary for Health and Healing on 11 January 1999

- **Father Kwame Labi** (Ghana, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa [Eastern]) as Executive Secretary for Community and Justice in Mission on 15 January 1999

- **Rev. Jacques Matthey** (Switzerland, Swiss Protestant Church Federation) as Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Mission Study on 1 February 1999

Team on Education and Ecumenical Formation

- **Rev. Dr Nyambura Njoroge** (Kenya, Presbyterian Church of East Africa) as Executive Secretary for Education and Ecumenical Formation on 1 March 1999

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies: Team on Regional Relations

- **Dr Marina Rizk** (Syria, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East [Eastern]) as Executive Secretary for the Middle East on 11 January 1999

2) Consultants

a) It was reported that the following consultants had been appointed by the General Secretary since the last Executive Committee meeting in December 1998:

Finance, Service and Administration:Office for Income Monitoring and Development

- **Mr John Lindner** (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]), Consultant - Income Development and Planning, Bossey and WCC Special Project (USA), for 2 years from 1 January 1999 (will complete 2 years' service)

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Justice, Peace, Creation

- **Ms Maria Koutatzi** (Greece, Roman Catholic Church) for 5 months from 1 April 1999 (will complete 1 year 5 months' service)

Team on Education and Ecumenical Formation

- **Dr Judo Poerwowidagdo** (Indonesia, Javanese Christian Churches in Central Java) as Consultant, Asia-Pacific Region, Ecumenical Theological Education, for 1 year from 1 January 1999 (will complete 9 years 4 months' service)

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies: Team on International Relations

- **Dr Beth Ferris** (USA, Society of Friends General Conference) as Consultant on Uprooted People for 1 year from 11 January 1999 (will complete 1 year's service)

b) It was reported that the following consultants would leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

General Secretariat

- **Rev. Douglas Smith** (USA, Disciples of Christ)on 31 March 1999 (will complete 2 years 6 months' service)

ACT

- **Mr Dirk Van Gorp** (USA, The United Methodist Church) on 31 May 1999 (will complete 2 years' service).

3) Other

ECLOF -- Appointed by ECLOF Executive Committee, February 1999:

- **Dr Priscilla Daniel** (India, Church of South India) at present Consultant, as Programme Secretary for 4 years from 1 June 1999 (will complete 5 years' service)

B. Nominations

1. *SPECIAL COMMISSION*

The Sub-committee took note of the suggested list of names being considered for membership of the Special Commission, and of the initial response received from the persons concerned. Further proposals from member churches would be requested and considered. A revised list would then be presented to the next meeting of the Executive Committee aiming at equal numbers of representatives from the Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches.

In discussions about the Special Commission, a proposal had emerged that seven members from the Orthodox side and seven from the non-Orthodox side be named as a "preparatory group" to prepare for the first meeting of the Special Commission itself. Thus, on recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **approved** the seven names proposed as members of this Preparatory Group from the non-Orthodox side, as follows:

Dr Aaron Tolen	Africa/Cameroon	ML	Presbyterian Ch. of Cameroon
Rev. Ying Gao	Asia/China	FO	China Christian Council
Bp Rolf Koppe	EU/Germany	MO	Evang. Church in Germany
Dr Mary Tanner	EU/UK	FL	Church of England
Rev. Ofelia Ortega	Caribbean/Cuba	FO	Presbyterian/Ref. Ch.in Cuba
Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson	NA/USA	MO	Reformed Church in America
Archbishop M. Peers	NA/Canada	MO	Anglican Church of Canada

It **was agreed** that Bishop Rolf Koppe be appointed co-moderator for the Special Commission.

The Moderator of the Central Committee and the General Secretary were asked to fix a date for the first meeting of this preparatory group.

2. *FAITH AND ORDER STANDING COMMISSION*

With regard to the appointment of the members of the Faith and Order Standing Commission by the Central Committee at its meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, 12 December 1998 (minutes pp.7-9), and in response to a concern of the Faith and Order Board, the Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed,**

> that Rev. Dr William G. Rusch, (USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), be added to the membership of the Faith and Order Standing Commission.

The Moderator expressed concern with regard to the special procedures which the former Faith and Order Board was obliged to follow in appointing the members of the new Standing Commission. He requested the general secretary to see that this question be taken up with the Commission in order to ensure that the problems encountered not recur in the future.

The General Secretary responded that the revised text of the Faith and Order bylaws would come to Central Committee in August 1999 for approval; that would be the appropriate context in which to verify whether the concerns had been sufficiently taken into account.

Ms Ogunsanya asked why there were no young people on the Faith and Order Commission. Dr Raiser explained that there was no intention to exclude youth but the procedures required the member churches to make formal proposals for membership; the Board then chose those whom they wished to forward for appointment. None of the member churches had put forward the name of a young person. However, the Plenary Commission was currently being appointed and care would be taken to include young people there.

In order to redress this problem, the Faith and Order Officers and staff had been exemplary in ensuring that younger theologians were invited to attend all their meetings. Thus there was a recognition of this responsibility, and they had set a model which others had followed.

3. *CENTRAL COMMITTEE*

The Sub-committee was informed of the resignation of Ms.Susan J. Bazzana (Anglican Church of Australia). It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**, that Rev. Erica Mathieson, from the same church, be invited to replace Ms Bazzana.

4. *PENSION FUND BOARD*

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**, that the following persons be appointed as WCC representatives to the Pension Fund Board of

the World Council of Churches:

- Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber
- Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis

5. *PROGRAMME COMMITTEE*

a) As the Programme Guidelines Committee at Harare had not been able to fully integrate the programmatic content of its proposals into the proposed framework, it recommended "that a small working group continue this task in preparation for the meeting of the Central Committee in August 1999".

Responding to this proposal, the Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**, to appoint a "Core Group" of the Programme Committee, composed of the following persons, to review programme proposals and bring a composite recommendation to the Central Committee:

Mr V. Avasi	Africa	Anglican	MLY
Fr K.M. George	Asia	Orthodox	MO
Dr F. Mangunsong	Asia	Lutheran	FL
Bp B. Rogerson	Europe	Anglican	MO
Metr. Ambrosius	Europe	Orthodox	MO
Dr A. Walker-Smith	North America	Baptist	FO
Dr M. Best	North America	United	FL
Bp A. Etchegoyen	Latin America	Methodist	MO

Mr Lee was concerned about the regional balances, but Dr Raiser pointed out that this was an ad hoc group that would meet only once. It was difficult to meet all the criteria in such a small group.

Responding to a question about the possibility of having co-moderators, it was noted that experience had shown that it was better to appoint a moderator and invite the group to designate one or more vice-moderators.

b) It was **agreed** that Father K.M. George be appointed as Moderator of the Programme Committee;

c) The final proposed composition of the Programme Committee would be brought to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, ensuring due regard to balances, particularly with regard to Africa, Asia, Orthodox and Youth in Europe;

d) It was further **agreed** that Rev. Hector Mendez, from the Caribbean Region, be replaced by

- Rev. Jeffrey McKenzie Caribbean Baptist Union of Jamaica MO

6. *MODERATORS of COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES and ADVISORY GROUPS*
The general secretary explained that staff had worked on the assumption that there would be five commissions/boards, and five advisory groups, although this could be changed. The present four commissions should be represented on the Programme Committee through their moderators. The Programme Committee would have to consider for which areas what kind of advisory body would be needed. The Sub-committee had designated moderators as a pre-emptive measure, but how the ten representatives on the Programme Committee would be composed was a matter for consideration at the first meeting of the Programme Committee.

a) The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed,** to nominate the following persons as Moderators of two of the Commissions (see also point 6 c):

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism - CWME
- Rev.Dr Marian McClure NA/USA Presbyterian Church FO

Education and Ecumenical Formation
- Rev.Dr Margot Kässmann EU/Germany Evang. Church in Germany FO

b) The appointment of the following Moderators was noted:

Programme Committee
- Fr K. M. George Asia/India Malankaran Syrian Orthodox. Church MO

Finance Committee
- Bp Dr W. Huber EU/Germany Evang. Church Berlin-Brandenburg MO

Faith and Order Commission
- Rev. Prof. Dr D. Yemba Africa/Zaire/Zimbabwe United Methodist Ch. MO

Bossey Board
- Dr Robert K. Welsh NA/USA Christian Church (Disciples) MO

Joint Working Group RCC-WCC
- Bp Dr Jonas Jonson EU/Sweden Church of Sweden MO

c) It was proposed that suggested names for the two remaining positions of Moderator - of the Commission on International Affairs and of the Joint Working Group WCC-Pentecostals - be brought to the next meeting of the Executive Committee .

d) On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee recommended the appointment of Moderators of the following Advisory Groups, and requested the Core Group of the Programme Committee to review the names for Moderators of the remaining Advisory Groups (Regional Relations and Inter-Religious Relations), taking into consideration the need to ensure balances (regional, denominational, gender, etc.).

Advisory Group on Communication

- Ms M. Boyadjian	ME/Lebanon	Armenian Apostolic Church Cilicia	FL

Advisory Group on Women

- Ms Mukami McCrum	EU/UK	Church of Scotland	FL

Advisory Group on Justice, Peace, Creation

- Rev. Stan McKay	NA/Canada	United Church of Canada	ML

Advisory Group on Youth

- Mr Hildo Bos	EU/Netherlands	Ecumenical Patriarchate	M Y L

Advisory Group on Church and Ecumenical Relations

- Fr Michael Tita	EU/Romania	Romanian Orthodox Church	M O

It was noted that the following regions/sub-regions were not represented in the above lists:

Caribbean Latin America Pacific East Asia

The General Secretary was asked to request member churches to make further proposals for membership of Committees/Commissions and Advisory Groups for presentation to the next meeting of the Executive Committee for possible revision.

*

NB: The Sub-committee's report on Membership Matters is to be found under the respective chapter, pp.20ff.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

A. Finance Presentation

At an early session of the Executive Committee, a presentation on the finances of the Council was given by staff, and opportunity provided for questions and discussion.

The matters dealt with included the preliminary operating results for 1998, including the Eighth Assembly; financial perspectives for 1999; the building renovation projects (Ecumenical Centre and Ecumenical Institute, Bossey); and a number of technical matters.

1. 1998 results:
Mr Christeler reported that the final (unaudited) accounts showed a sizeable operating surplus. Particular efforts had been made on the part of staff to reduce expenditure, with considerable success.

A series of documents were shared with members of the Executive, including a summary of contributions received, together with supporting material providing analyses.

Operating funds were being moved to Activity funds, which would allow programmatic activites to benefit from outstanding balances at 31/12/98. Possible uses for the funds included the costs of the Ecumenical Centre renovation work, rebuilding the Assembly reserve, technological update, and staff training. The latter items were a result of the Council's restructuring efforts which in some cases would require significant investments in technological infrasturcture. Also, the restructuring would demand new skills from staff, necessitating a training programme.

Responding to a question about the savings resulting from the downsizing of staff, the general secretary said that between 1995 and 1998 there was a reduction from 301 to 213 staff : that is, a reduction of 90 over 3 years.

Regarding reserves, Mr Christeler said these had been accumulated over the years and were designated for specific purposes.

With regard to income, the Council's investment portfolio had shown a good performance in 1998, and income from offices rented out to tenants was improving. The amount of undesignated income (UDI) was slightly above budget for 1998.

2. Provisional Assembly results
It was reported that the accounting was not yet complete pending the settlement of some special situations. A deficit of ca. CHF 2 million had been anticipated. Ms Geuss noted that the total budget had been CHF 11 m. but this was unrealistic.

Regular contributions were made to the Assembly Reserve to ensure that funds were available as preparations began for the next assembly. Some churches contributed an annual amount to this Reserve.

3. 1999 budget

New information had become available since the September 1998 budget as all the pledges had been reviewed and compared against the budgeted amounts. Mr Christeler affirmed that the current shortfall of CHF 1 m. was essentially due to a reduction from one source.

Dr Best pointed out that 10 countries provided 95% of the Council's income, which made it vulnerable in cases where a donor could not meet the pledge.

4. Reserves

This was a technical issue and would be discussed in the Finance Sub-committee.

5. Renovation projects

A series of slides was shown, showing the deteriorating condition of the Jura Wing of the Ecumenical Centre. Mr Christeler reported that the Council had been granted a subsidy of CHF 1.7 m by the Etat de Genève for the renovation work on the Ecumenical Centre, which. showed their support for the Council as a long-established NGO in Geneva. Reserves earmarked for renovation work amounted to approximately CHF 850,000.

At the time when the Jura wing had been going through a prior partial renovation, mistakes had been made in relation to the insulation: insufficient room had been given for air circulation, so condensation had produced excessive humidity. The building was 30 years old, and some parts would need almost complete re-building. Some of the roofing needed part renovation, and the cafeteria floor required urgent attention due to damage caused by humidity.

Ms Frey, staff member responsible for the renovation work, said that renovations to the Centre had taken place constantly over the years: CHF 1.4 m had been spent on such work in the period up to 1991.

Concluding the presentation, Mr Christeler reminded members of the Executive that only 50% of member churches contributed their membership fee each year. This was a matter that the Committee would have to address.

B. Report of Finance Sub-committee

Dr Marion Best, moderating, invited Bishop Huber to present the report of the Finance Sub-committee.

Bishop Huber began by noting that in the present situation of the World Council, it was necessary to develop a deeper understanding of the inter-relationship between the

programmatic work of the Council and the material conditions for this work. He referred to the helpful discussions which had taken place in the Sub-committee, although there had not been opportunity this time to meet prior to the Executive Committee as was the custom.

The report concentrated on recommendations on items requiring decision by the Executive Committee.

1. **Investments**

1.1 Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS)

The Council's current target for investment in EDCS was "10% of available funds".

This decision was difficult to implement mainly because of the vagueness of the concept of "available funds". In addition, regardless of the definition of available funds, their level was bound to fluctuate over time, therefore making the 10% target impossible to implement in practice.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

that staff, through the Investment Advisory Group (IAG), prepare a proposal for a fixed amount designated in Swiss Francs to be invested in EDCS, without going below the present level of investment.

1.2 Ethical Guidelines

Responding to a question, Bishop Huber explained that the guidelines were very general. It would be important to clarify whether there were ethical funds that promote development, and in which the Council could invest.

Mr Gadegaard wondered if it could be formulated in a way that would ensure that the fixed amount would be in the area of what was estimated when it was set at 10%? Bishop Huber explained that we were currently at 5% and in any case would not go below that figure but above it. But first he believed we should deal with our engagement with EDCS which meant there would be little or no revenue from funds invested with EDCS. Then it would be possible to fix the sum for the next 5 years.

The general secretary pointed out that in referring to "5% of available funds", there must be some knowledge of what these were. This referred to those funds that were to be invested with a long term perspective and where the WCC had an understanding of which funds were available for that kind of commitment. He affirmed that it was plausible to work towards a fixed amount; the Council had once increased its investment and it had

remained there, but was below 10%. He felt that the fixed amount should come close to an equivalent of 10% of the funds invested with long term perspective.

The intention was to fulfil the Council's commitment to investing in justice in a more understandable way, both to EDCS and ourselves. First we seek to reaffirm the definition of availability of funds and could come up with a definition that could be submitted to this Executive and safeguard us against fluctuations of available funds so that our commitment to investments is guaranteed for a number of years without having to readjust so often. We need to find the rules and make them transparent.

Bishop Huber pointed out that these investments dated back to earlier generations who wanted to facilitate the work of the Council, so they also had to have a revenue which would do that. The point was to find the right balance. The last Central Committee had mentioned 10%, and this should be fulfilled under the conditions of our experience, in terms of which funds were available and which were not. What would be a fair fixed number: near to 10%?

1.2 The Sub-committee took note of the report made by outside independent counsel about the impossibility of determining whether mutual funds contain proscribed elements of these guidelines, or, more generally, whether companies:

- engage in discriminatory employment practices,
- de facto support violations of human rights, and
- contribute directly to environmental destruction

The ethical guidelines were mainly restrictive as currently formulated.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

that the Investment Advisory Group (IAG) make proposals for a more proactive understanding of the principles of these guidelines, and encourage the search for ethical funds to be used for the investments.

1.3 Allocation of Endowment Portfolio Revenues

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

that the following distribution of income be made in 1998

- *6% distribution to specified beneficiaries*
- *6% to recapitalise those endowments*
- *8% to constitute an income reserve to guarantee continuous distribution levels over time.*

1.4 Transfer and Consolidation of part of the Portfolio

The Moderator referred to the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of September 1998 with regard to continuing one of the Council's investment portfolios with Banque Edouard Constant. Bishop Huber affirmed that the Investment Advisory Group had advised that the time had come to move this portfolio to Lombard Odier.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

that the transfer of the general portfolio of the World Council of Churches from Banque Edouard Constant to Lombard Odier be effected by staff as soon as practicable.

2. **Use of Available Funds generated by 1998 results**

2.1 Transfer of Operating funds to Activities

Mr Christeler said that the Staff Leadership Group (SLG) would review the proposal below and report further to the next meeting of this Executive.

The Sub-committee heard that accumulated operating funds and some 1998 surpluses had been designated for financing specific aspects of the Council's programmatic work.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Commitee **agreed**

that these amounts be transferred to Activities which relate to the original donor designation.

2.2 Other surpluses

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

under the assumption that remaining available funds, after appropriation under 2.1 above, would amount to the current estimate of CHF 1.3 million, that

- CHF 600,000 be designated towards the renovation of the Ecumenical Centre
- CHF 300,000 be designated towards rebuilding the Assembly Fund, and
- CHF 100,000 be designated for technological improvements and related staff training in the restructuring process;

that no appropriation be made to the Investment Fluctuation Reserve following opinion as to the required balance from outside independent counsel;

that the use of any remaining available funds be decided upon by the Moderator of the Finance Sub-committee and the General Secretary of the WCC.

3. **Reserves Consolidation**

The general secretary pointed out that the proposals indicated were only monitoring measures, and did not state for what purpose these funds were to be used. He asked what were these funds to be used for? What were legitimate purposes for which we can draw on our own resources? He felt it necessary to establish a set of categories of purposes for which these funds could be used. Monitoring and pastoral guidelines alone were not sufficient.

In the light of discussion, it was decided to remove the General Secretary's Discretionary Fund from the list of reserve funds for the time being, pending further discussion within the staff, and the drawing up of content guidelines.

3.1 On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:

that the proposal to consolidate operating funds down to a more manageable number be implemented by staff as part of the 1998 closing;

that the list of funds indicated below be consolidated into the "WCC General Reserve":

	Value as at 31.12.97 CHF 000s
Fund Name:	
WCC General Reserve	3,486
Emergency Reserve	2,154
Unrestricted Relations funds	17
Total of WCC General Reserve after consolidation	5,657

4. 1999 Forecast

4.1 The Finance Sub-committee affirmed the mandate to the WCC to secure balanced operating results for 1999. It noted the efforts being made to improve the situation on the income side, but emphasized that action would also need to be taken on the expenses side.

4.2 On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:

that a contingency plan be established by staff with emphasis on increasing the Council's income and prioritising the sources of possible savings from amongst such expense items as travel, professional fees and grants, and that extreme prudence be exercised in recruitment of new staff. Details of the contingency plan and related action taken should be reported to the Executive Committee at its August meeting.

5. Renovations

5.1 Château de Bossey

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:

that the feasibility study on the renovation of Bossey be completed in parallel with the plans to enlarge the academic and guesthouse programmes. The outcome of this study should be reported to the Executive Committee at its August meeting.

5.2 The Ecumenical Centre

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:

that the Assembly Finance Committee recommendation be implemented and that a comprehensive financial proposal be presented to the Executive Committee by the second half of 1999 .

6. Committees

6.1 Audit Committee

Bishop Huber indicated the membership of the Audit Committee, noting that the former moderator, Mr John Briggs, had resigned from the chairmanship due to pressure of work. As there was no urgency regarding this appointment, it was decided to leave the decision to the Officers when they meet in June.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee also **agreed**:

that the nominations for membership of the Audit Committee be approved for 4 years and that appointment for a further period up to the first Executive Committee meeting following the next Assembly be subject to a separate decision of the Executive Committee;

that the Audit Committee be required to report to the Executive Committee at least annually, once the external audit by independent auditors is completed.

6.2 Investment Advisory Group (IAG)
It was noted that the IAG comprised several bankers and others dealing with international financial investments from the Geneva area. They had no decision-making power, but offered advice in relation to the Council's investment portfolios.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:
that the nominations for membership of the Investment Advisory Group be approved and that appointment for a further period up to the first Executive Committee meeting following the next Assembly be subject to a separate decision of the Executive Committee.

7. Assembly Results

7.1 The Sub-committee noted the report of the preliminary unaudited results, and the forecast of the final out-turn. The Sub-committee requested that the final results be presented to the next meeting of the Executive Committee .

7.2 On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:
that Assembly fund balances be built up progressively so that the Central Committee will be in a financial position adequate to begin work on the preparation of the Ninth Assembly in due time.

7.3 Eighth Assembly Recommendations follow-up
The former Central Committee had proposed inviting member churches to take up a special offering for the Jubilee Fund. This was communicated to the churches but only a fairly small sum was raised. The idea of an ecumenical commitment Sunday was felt to be a good one but clearly it would take some years to implement effectively.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:
that staff review the recommendations from the Assembly and submit proposals for decision by Central Committee on their implementation. This would include mainly the following recommendations:
- observation of an Ecumenical Commitment Sunday with an offering for the activities of the WCC;
- interpretation of the rules regarding financial participation and consequences of not fulfilling the financial obligations specified in rule I.6.c.;
- definition of ways to implement CHF 10 million contribution target in member church contributions within 5 years;
- pursuance of the concept of an "ideal financial structure" - matching sources and uses of funds;
- implementation of a 3-year forecast cycle for the WCC's finances.

13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
Meetings of WCC Executive and Central Committees
(excluding travel days)

1999		
Executive Committee	16 -19 March	Bossey, near Geneva
Executive Committee	24 - 25 August	Geneva
Central Committee	26 August - 3 September	Geneva
2000		
Executive Committee	29 February -3 March	
Executive Committee	26 -29 September	
2001		
Executive Committee	23 - 24 January	
Central Committee	25 January - 2 February	
Executive Committee	11 - 14 September	
2002		
Executive Committee	19 - 22 February	
Executive Committee	27 - 28 August	
Central Committee	29 August - 6 September	Election of new general secretary
2003		
Executive Committee	18 -21 February	
Executive Committee	26 -27 August	
Central Committee	28 August - 5 September	
2004		
Executive Committee	17 -20 February	
Executive Committee	24 -25 August	
Central Committee	26 August - 3 September	
2005		
Executive Committee	15 - 18 February	

Note: Members of these Committees should plan to arrive at least one day before a meeting is scheduled to begin, and to leave on the day following the last day of the meeting. Members of the Programme Committee and Finance Sub-committee/Finance Committee may be required to arrive even earlier.

14. CLOSING ACTIONS

A. Evaluation of this Meeting

Reference was made to the evaluation made by the previous Executive Committee about its period in office. (See minutes of their meeting of September 1998, appendix III.)

The Moderator felt that the Committee had already begun a good processof building community. He described the session as a cheerful, down-to-earth, transparent, participatory, dynamic and creative experience.

A number of members said how much they had enjoyed the meeting. They were appreciative of the way members had participated, for the way staff had prepared the meeting and the opportunity to meet other staff members during the visit to the Ecumenical Centre.

For some who were new to the procedures of a WCC governing body, there had been a lot of new information to absorb, but this also was perceived as a challenge and an encouragement to find ways to be closer to their churches and regional situations. Members had been grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the role of the Executive and Central Committees and about their own role within the WCC.

B. Other

Fr Kishkovsky reported that from 16-18 March, he had been asked to attend a conference in Vienna on peace and tolerance in Kosovo, which offered opportunity for dialogue about the situation as well as considerable documentation. The Appeal of Conscience was an inter-faith organisation, a forum for bringing together people involved in conflict situations. As far as the religious leaders present there were concerned, relationships were good; they were able to deal fundamentally and understandingly with each other, passing through moments of hostility to better moments of agreement and common concern for their people.

C. Closing Actions

The Moderator expressed thanks to the General Secretary and senior staff; to the administrative staff and minute-writer; to the Director of Bossey and her assistants for hosting this meeting of the Executive Committee and making it such a joyful time.
The General Secretary responded, thanking the Moderator and Vice-Moderator for their encouragement.

The Moderator adjourned this meeting of the Executive Committee at 16.20 hrs on Friday 19 March 1999, and offered the closing prayer.

APPENDIX I

List of Participants

Officers:	H.H. Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia	(Moderator)
	Dr Marion S. Best	(Vice-Moderator)
	Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser	(General Secretary)
Members:	Rev. Dr Hilarion Alfeyev	
	Rev. Yadessa Daba	
	Ms Inamar Correa de Souza	
	Rev. Anders Gadegaard	
	Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber	
	Ms Jana Kalinova	
	Ms Carmencita Karagdag	
	H.G. Mar Cyril Aphrem Karim	
	Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick	
	Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
	Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa	
	Prof. Dr Samuel Lee	
	Rev. Dr Maake S. J. Masango	
	Bishop Nifon of Slobozia and Calarasi	
	Ms Abigail O. Ogunsanya	
	Rt.Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
	Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis	
	Rev. Dr. Ilaiti Sevati Tuwere	
	Bishop McKinley Young	
President:	H.E. Metr. Chrysostomos of Ephesus	
Apologies:	Justice Sophia O.A. Adinyira	(Vice-Moderator)
	Ms Donnalie E.C. Edwards	
Staff:	Ms Jeanne Becher	
	Rev. Myra Blyth	
	Mr Robert Christeler	

Ms Kristine Greenaway
Rev. Sam Kobia
Mr Yorgo Lemopoulos

part-time:

Ms Karin Achtelstetter
Rev. Dwain Epps
Ms Joan Geuss
Ms Marta Palma
Rev. Bob Scott
Ms Sara Speicher
Rev. Carlos Sintado
Ms Jean Stromberg
Mr Huibert van Beek
Mr Marlin VanElderen

Minute-Writer: Ms Rosemary Green

Administration: Mr Gerard Scarff
Ms Ursula Zierl

APPENDIX II

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Programme Sub-Committee

Dr Marion Best	Moderator
Ms Inamar Correa de Souza	
Ms Jana Kalinova	
Archbishop Mar Cyril Aphrem Karim	
Rev. Septemmy Lakawa	
Rev. Dr Maake Masango	
Bishop Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis	

Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee

Justice Sophia O. A. Adinyira	Moderator (absent)
Rev. Dr Hilarion Alfeyev	
Rev. Yadessa Daba	
Ms Donnalie Edwards	(absent)
Rev. Anders Gadegaard	
Ms Carmencita Karagdag	
Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick	Acting Moderator

Finance Sub-Committee

Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber	Moderator
Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
Prof. Dr Samuel Lee	
Bishop Nifon	
Ms Abigail Ogunsanya	
Rev. Dr Ilaiti Sevati Tuwere	
Bishop McKinley Young	

APPENDIX III

MODERATOR'S OPENING REMARKS

I greet you all with profound spiritual joy. We met in Harare as delegates of our churches and now we meet as members of the new Executive Committee. What does it mean to be a member of the Executive Committee? What are the implications of our being together as Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches? Let me share with you some personal reflections and perspectives:

1. Being a member of the Executive Committee means engaging ourselves in a dynamic and creative process of working together. We must realise that working together is not easy, especially for a group of people like us who have come together from different regions, cultural settings, ethnic origins and church traditions, and we should not take it for granted. Working together requires mutual knowledge, mutual understanding, mutual trust; a clear and comprehensive picture of the procedures we have to follow, the methodologies and style of work we have to adopt, and objectives we have to attain in view of our common calling. Above all, it requires a deep commitment to the ecumenical vision. Naturally we have different views, perspectives and convictions on issues of common concern. Without bypassing our differences, how can we transcend them and do together what is best for the Council? How can we reorganise the internal life of the Council and give a new vitality to its ecumenical witness? This is indeed a great challenge before us.

2. Being a member of the Executive Committee means reflecting and acting together with a profound sense of responsibility and accountability. As we grow older, we become - and must become - more responsible. This is part of human nature. Is this not also true in the ecumenical movement?

As we grow in our ecumenical maturation we must reflect a qualitative growth in our ecumenical responsibility in terms of the way we face challenges, confront problems and treat issues. Assuming responsibility means having a sense of accountability. Responsibility and accountability are inter-connected; they condition and complete each other. As individuals and as Executive Committee we are accountable to the Central Committee, to our churches, and above all to God who has called us to serve the ecumenical movement through the WCC. Therefore we must manifest a quality in our work together that goes beyond the ordinary understanding of responsibility and

accountability, a quality that gives integrity, credibility and relevance to our work together.

3. We are entering a new period in the history of the ecumenical movement in general and the World Council of Churches in particular. I do not want now to make a pre-judgement about this post-Harare period in the history of the WCC. It is clear however that in many respects the years ahead of us will determine the future course of the ecumenical movement in the 21st century. In this context here are a few observations:

a) We are going to work as a Council based on a new structure, programme priorities, and will adopt new models, methodologies, and styles of work: these changes must be reflected in all areas and at all levels in the life and witness of the World Council.

b) We will soon embark on a major process of internal dialogue with the Orthodox Churches. Undoubtedly, this process will be a critical one for the future of the Council in general and for the presence of the Orthodox in the Council in particular. Hence it requires serious coordination, and close follow-up by us;

c) Our member churches are becoming more critical and expectant vis à vis the Council. I believe this is a positive sign which calls us to a credible relationship with the churches, by listening to their concerns and being responsive to their needs.

d) Last but not least, the ecumenical movement is facing challenges emerging from the contemporary societies - challenges which require relevant answers. We must maintain as church our specific identity, yet at the same time keeping pace with the rhythm of changing times and realities. We must be faithful to the Gospel, yet at the same time we should respond to the new challenges that concern us in our Christian life and witness at local, regional and global levels. How can the ecumenical movement help the churches carry on their evangelistic, missionary, educational and diaconical tasks in a responsible and responsive way?

Therefore, as a Council we are beginning a journey of hope. As we again and again affirmed in Harare, hope in its Christian understanding is not a passive attitude, a state of wait and see: it is a committed engagement. This engagement, this commitment, sustained by a sense of responsibility and accountability, must be concretely manifested through the work of the Executive Committee. In fact, according to the revised Constitution and Rules, this Executive Committee will assure the heavy task of monitoring and overseeing the programmes and activities of the Council, including the task of determining the allocation of resources. What a formidable task! We have a huge responsibility before us, dear sisters and brothers in Christ.

It is important therefore that we start building community together within the context of the Executive Committee. Community building means knowing more about each other; it means knowing each other. Mutual knowledge generates mutual trust which is a key factor in community building.

We should remember that we are not alone as Executive Committee in this journey of hope: our work will be supported by staff - I know them well! We have a committed General Secretary, who is a man of profound theological reflection, a man of vision, as well as being a good administrator. I also want to assure you that our new Deputy General Secretary, Directors and staff are strongly committed to their ecumenical work. Therefore we are going to work together with the staff with mutual trust and understanding.

Let us start our journey of hope together in joy, in faith, and in hope!

H.H. Aram I

APPENDIX IV

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Together with my colleagues, I welcome you warmly to this first meeting of the new Executive Committee after the Assembly. As staff, we have worked hard to prepare for this meeting. Four weeks ago, we had a first opportunity to review our work with the Officers and to consider the agenda for this meeting. We have been looking forward to welcoming you here at Bossey and are happy that today we can begin what we hope will be a fruitful and mutually enriching period of cooperation with you as the Executive Committee.

My presentation of the agenda has already made you aware that we want to take sufficient time during this meeting for mutual introductions and orientation to the work. We realize that for most of you the work of the World Council and the responsibilities of a governing body are still new and that you will need time to familiarize yourselves with people, structures and procedures. What binds us together, in addition to our basic commitment to furthering the ecumenical movement, is the experience of the Harare Assembly. We shall therefore begin our work by evaluating the Assembly and move from there to the task of shaping the post-assembly agenda for the WCC. Papers have been prepared for the main tasks before us, and we ask for your understanding that some of these were not finalized in time for you to study beforehand. They will be introduced to you by the staff colleagues responsible, and we take sufficient time to consider them before referring particular issues to sub-committees. In my report, I will try to set the stage for our work during the coming days.

Three months ago, we concluded the *Assembly* at Harare.Together with the celebration of the 50th anniversary, the Assembly has marked an important point in the life of the WCC. In more than one sense, we are at the beginning of a new period. How we enter into this new phase will be determined to a considerable extent by the way you experienced the Assembly. Impressions and evaluations are divided. Much depends on the expectation with which people came to Harare. Those who expected, or were afraid of, confrontations or even a profound split around the challenge from Orthodox churches or the question of homosexuality, were relieved, and many have praised the wisdom of the Assembly leadership, especially of the Moderator, for having guided the meeting through this very critical moment. Many of those who expected the Assembly to provide a clear vision and a compelling programmatic profile for the WCC were disappointed. They felt there was not enough opportunity for open and, where necessary, controversial debate.

The staff were in a particular situation. For the two years prior to the Assembly, they had to cope with the confusing and painful consequences of staff reductions and internal reorganization while at the same time preparing for the Assembly. At Harare itself, they were fully occupied behind the scenes, trying to resolve various crises as they arose. Many were just too exhausted to mobilize energies for a courageous look beyond the Assembly itself. There is, of course, a feeling of satisfaction that it was possible for the Assembly to take place without major problems, and there is the encouraging experience of team work and solidarity. But it has taken several weeks after the Assembly for feelings of frustration to be aired and for a sense of the significance and implications of the event to be gained.

Where are we now, three months later? The first fact to mention is that since the beginning of January we have begun to work according to the new *internal organization* which groups staff activities in teams and clusters.This new pattern which has taken the place of the unit structure, (which had been in existence with certain modifications since 1972), is an attempt to translate the main thrust of the Common Understanding and Vision document into the ways of operating of the WCC. It is meant to enable the organization to function as an integrated whole, both in terms of its administration and its activities. The details of this pattern of internal organization have been worked out by staff teams in close collaboration with the former Executive Committee. Already during 1998, we have benefited from the services of a consultant, Dr. Morgan Gould, who has supervised the staff leadership in managing the process of change and translating the conceptual and structural framework into clear strategies and procedures which could be appropriated by all staff. What had been preparatory work up to the Assembly, has now shifted to implementation. Many features, such as the establishment of an integrated cycle of programme and budget planning, evaluation and reporting, designing procedures of human resource management, including staff recruitment, development and compensation, integrating the use of information technology and communication into the new organizational pattern, are still to be worked out. We are happy that we can count on the assistance of the consultant throughout this year, hoping that by the end of the year the process of change will have been completed. In meeting with staff colleagues you will realize that we are still in a transition phase, exploring new ways of working, with all the excitement, but also with feelings of uncertainty that go along with it. What we can say already now is that the change to the new structure was necessary, not only for financial reasons, and that it offers new and exciting possibilities.

It is, however, not only the process of internal change which has made us realize that the Harare Assembly has opened a new chapter in the life and history of the WCC. The CUV process has begun to shape a *new profile for the WCC* which in its basic features has been confirmed by the Assembly. The implications of the CUV document are manifested most tangibly in the revised Art.III of the Constitution and in the various changes to the

Rules of the WCC. We will have opportunity to look at the respective decisions of the Assembly in detail and consider their consequences for the workings of the governing and advisory bodies of the Council While as staff we have known about these proposed amendments for a long time prior to the Assembly and have cooperated in shaping their formulations, it is only now that we begin to appropriate them in their full meaning and envisage the consequences for our work. Since most of you have not been used to the internal procedures of the Council, the change may not be so obvious. Nevertheless, we will have to strive together to gain a clear understanding and a firm grasp of the new framework which gives added responsibilities to the Executive Committee. What we have at hand is the basic design or perhaps the foundations of what is to become a living fellowship of churches and a viable organization in its service. The Assembly has issued the "construction permit", but it had to entrust its execution to the new Central and Executive Committees. The phrase "building together", used in the report of the Programme Guidelines Committee, is therefore very pertinent, and I shall return to it later.

The fact that at least some of the Orthodox churches call for a "radical restructuring" could introduce a sense of uncertainty as to whether we have really crossed the decisive threshold to a new "common understanding". How far have the changes introduced by decisions of the Assembly helped to adapt the shape of the WCC to the new realities? Are we moving forward or perhaps rather backward? Some might even ask whether with this enforced or imposed process of change, we are not running the risk of weakening the WCC, of losing more of our identity than gaining in the quality of our fellowship. We should hear these questions as expressions of concern out of real love for the WCC and what it has meant for many in the past 20 or 30 years. It is my conviction, however, - already expressed in my report to the Assembly - that the profound changes in the world around us, in the ecumenical movement and in the life of the churches themselves oblige the WCC to transform itself in order to remain true to its vocation. This concerns our institutional structures as well as the ethos and styles of work. We have to take the risk of change and try to shape it constructively.

Looking back at the Assembly, it is my own assessment that the Assembly has confirmed and encouraged the *process of change* which had been initiated by the former Central Committee, including the understanding of the WCC as a fellowship of churches and of its role in the polycentric ecumenical movement. The process of change in which we are engaged coincides with similar processes of critical self-assessment in many of the member churches and ecumenical partner organizations. Many working assumptions which have been taken for granted for a long time have been called into question, and there is a widespread feeling that we need a new orientation. Certainly the Assembly was not able to articulate clearly the new directions, but in accepting the CUV document as the basic framework to guide the further process, it has taken a decisive step towards

shaping a new profile. To quote an experienced ecumenical colleague: "The Harare Assembly represents a maturing of the WCC, as its member churches engaged honestly and openly with tough issues that exist between them, but without 'beating up' one another around those issues. The Assembly, indeed, represented that 'ecumenical space' I heard you identifying in your opening statement to the Assembly."

It is my hope that our discussions during these days will help us to spell out in greater detail the implications of the decisions of the Assembly regarding the future of the WCC, to identify the nature of the changes recommended and to appropriate them. Let me try to identify some of the elements.

a) The CUV document places the reflection about the understanding of the WCC in the wider context of the ecumenical movement. It recognizes that the WCC is part of a complex network of partners who, together with the Council and its member churches, share in the one ecumenical movement. More than ever, the WCC has to develop a style of cooperative *partnership* in its work, recognizing the potential and strengths of the respective partners as well as its own limitations. This is true particularly in the case of cooperation with councils and conferences of churches on national and regional levels as well as with Christian World Communions, but also with the various international ecumenical organizations. For the WCC, this means readiness to support and empower partners in what they can do better or best, rather than wanting to take the lead in every case.

b) The CUV document describes the basic understanding of the WCC in terms of a "fellowship of churches". Being part of a *fellowship* is more than maintaining functional or cooperative relations of partnership.Fellowship includes mutual accountability and a particular quality and discipline of relationships which, in an earlier stage of ecumenical discussion, has been described by the term "conciliarity". Since the Central Committee adopted the CUV document, the question has been raised and will have to be discussed further - not only in the Special Commission with the Orthodox churches - whether 'membership' in an institutional sense is the right category to describe what it means to be part of a fellowship. What is clear is the fact that this understanding goes beyond the frequent description of the WCC as "servant of its member churches". The WCC, both as a fellowship of churches and in its organizational expression, is more than a service agency. Obviously, the discussion about the full meaning of this fellowship and its relation to the stated purpose of furthering the visible unity of the church will continue and accompany us in the years to come.

c) As an *organization,* the WCC has the task of giving expression to and deepening the fellowship among its member churches and to enable them to act together in

> witness and service as the occasion requires. The subtle but decisive change here is that the WCC is no longer seen as "over against" the churches. It is rather the trustee of the relationships *between* the churches, including the task of holding the churches accountable to each other. Art.III of the Constitution adds a second set of functions, calling the WCC as an organization to serve the coherence of the one ecumenical movement on the global level. Its role here is that of the animator, the mediator, initiating and furthering partnership and cooperation, and occasionally to engage in advocacy together with or on behalf of its partners.

Whether we speak of fellowship or of partnership, central to the CUV perspective is a *relational understanding* of the WCC and its task. While this dimension has always been part of the understanding of the WCC, placing it in the centre does represent a change which we still have to spell out in all its implications. Some fear that this will diminish or weaken the programmatic and "prophetic" profile of the WCC which has shaped its perception in the churches and in the wider public over the last two or three decades.

The new internal organization has, for administrative purposes, distinguished two clusters: one for Relationships and the second for Issues and Themes. However, "relationships" and also "fellowship" are not ends in themselves, but are meant to serve the fulfilment of the common calling. On the other hand, all the activities responding to ecumenical issues are dependent on and embedded in relationships. This shows that we still have to continue in the effort to overcome dichotomies which have been inherited from the previous period. Many of the programmatic activities of the Council in the period leading up to the Harare Assembly have nourished this relational understanding and can help to transcend the old distinctions. I am thinking of the studies on *The Church as Koinonia,* of the *Theology of Life* process, but also of the *Programme to Overcome Violence*. The metaphor of the "ecumenical space", which I introduced in my report to the Assembly, was an attempt to enter more deeply into this relational understanding of the WCC and its role in the ecumenical movement. In a recent retreat of the Staff Leadership Group, we used the adjectives "safe", "sustainable" and "sacred" to characterize this ecumenical space which we feel called to shape and to build.

The Message of the Harare Assembly used the title *Being Together under the Cross in Africa*. At the end, the message says: "The World Council of Churches began its journey in faith with the determination to stay together. We experienced this same determination in Harare, even when we were aware of the difficulties that we faced. As churches long committed to staying together, we now commit ourselves to being together in a continuing growth towards visible unity - not only in assemblies and ecumenical gatherings but each in every place. It is this being together that all ecumenical work at every level must serve." The report of the Programme Guidelines Committee emphasized the call and the readiness of the churches to "move together", echoing the metaphor used

in the Vision Statement of the people of God on the way together.

As we have come to reflect about a post-assembly agenda, another formulation, also in the Report of the Programme Guidelines Committee, has become even more significant, i.e. the call to "build together". Particularly the African presentation and the Africa programme of the WCC in the years prior to the Assembly have challenged us to consider our ecumenical task today in terms of reconstruction and the rebuilding of sustainable and viable communities. The relational emphasis in the understanding of the WCC must be seen to serve this purpose of building together, thus overcoming the old dichotomies of unity and mission, unity and justice, prophetic and reconciling ministries, study and action. In different contexts, the image of building together has already been used, most notably with regard to building a culture of peace and of solidarity, a culture of dialogue and sharing, a culture of caring for life.

While the WCC has focused on the relationship of gospel and culture for several years, we have only begun to consider what it means to build an alternative culture in response to the impact of the processes of globalization. The study process on *Ecclesiology and Ethics* has lifted up the understanding of the church as a moral community or as a setting where moral formation is taking place. Culture, morality and spirituality are intimately related. It is in this context that a new and constructive profile of ecumenism is emerging which is intimately related to the question of what it means to be the church today.

As you will see from the document reflecting our staff discussions looking towards a post-assembly agenda (see appendix V), it is within this conceptual framework that we begin to envisage the work of the WCC following the Assembly. We believe that it takes up the recommendations from the Assembly, but develops them further so that we will eventually arrive at what might be called a "management tool" to help us in planning, implementing and monitoring our activities in the period ahead. We are eager to enter into dialogue with you about this emerging perspective and hope to receive from you the mandate which enables us to work out this initial framework in greater detail for presentation to the Central Committee.

Konrad Raiser

APPENDIX V

WHAT HAS HARARE ASKED US TO DO?
Towards building a post-assembly agenda

This working paper, based on staff discussions in early 1999, is intended as a resource for discussion by the Executive Committee of the agenda of the WCC after Harare. The document (1) highlights three overall concerns (for fellowship, for responding to ecumenical issues, for effective working methodologies); (2) looks at the significance of the revised WCC constitutional language regarding the purposes and functions of the Council in the light of the assembly's pledge to "move together"; and (3) proposes a possible three-point response to the call of the Programme Guidelines Committee for an "overarching conceptual framework" for shaping and interpreting the WCC's post-Harare agenda: responding to globalization, caring for life, and being the church. The document concludes by suggesting three questions with which the Executive Committee might begin its discussion and eventual response.

Introduction

Immediately after the assembly, WCC staff began wrestling with the question: "How do we arrive at a common understanding of the implications of the assembly for our future work?"

The need to begin with this methodological question is explained in the report of the Programme Guidelines Committee. While that report presented *"both the programmatic content and a framework for focusing and directing the future activities of the Council"* the Committee had not been able *"fully to integrate this programmatic content into the proposed framework"*. It therefore suggested that *"a small working group continue this task in preparation for the meeting of the Central Committee in August 1999"*.

An attempt by the staff to interpret the assembly is only one step along the way. Reflections by the staff must be shared and discussed with the Executive Committee, then forwarded to the "small working group" or "core group" of the Programme Committee, as recommended by the Programme Guidelines Committee. This group should meet before August 1999 in readiness for the Central Committee, which has the task of finally determining the WCC's post-assembly agenda.

Besides discussing future programme content and the conceptual framework for it, staff have been preparing, in consultation with the constituency, proposals for a number of

Executive Committee decisions concerning budgetary projections, moderatorship and membership of governing and advisory bodies, possible future working styles of governing bodies and the like.

I. Three generic concerns

As the staff has tried to interpret together the assembly as a whole, three interlocking concerns have been highlighted, which must be addressed with energy and focus in the coming years:

- ***fellowship*** (strengthening and broadening the fellowship; the importance of making the space and taking the time to know, understand and accept Orthodox and Protestant worlds; theological reflection on the meaning of WCC membership; listening to churches, people, regions, ecumenical partners; cooperation and interdependence in doing things together; new ways of building relationships; bringing networks together);

- ***responsiveness to ecumenical issues*** (shaping programmes that reflect the needs of member churches; responding to the challenges of the world; working for an ecumenical response to the challenges of a globalized world which goes beyond a "Christianized" view of the world; discerning the specificity of the WCC contribution – what the WCC is uniquely equipped and uniquely expected to do;

- ***methodologies*** (interconnection of fellowship and methodology; internal and external methodologies; inductive and deductive methods; accountability on every level; networking approach in identifying expertise and other partners, farming out, broadening the base, listening, responding; seven-year planning, overall planning, stages and steps of planning – implementation, evaluation, reporting).

It is not a coincidence that these three generic concerns surface throughout what follows; rather, it illustrates the pervasive interlocking character of these dimensions of the life and activities of the WCC.

II. The purposes and functions of the WCC

As the staff has looked back and tried to listen carefully to "what Harare has asked us to do", the importance of the decision taken by the assembly to adopt a revised Article III of the Constitution – "Purposes and Functions of the WCC" – has become more and more evident. In this light a number of key questions should be raised before discussing more specifically the post-assembly agenda:

- What are the implications of this constitutional change

- in the life of the member churches?
- in the WCC's relationships with its ecumenical partners?
- in the life of the Council?

- Does this constitutional change imply a significantly new attitude among member churches and require a new role for the WCC staff?

How we respond to such questions will obviously affect the nature, character and main orientations of our work in the coming years. Several immediate and ongoing tasks emerge from this consideration:

- fostering the ongoing process of *reception of the CUV* in the life of the churches and in the WCC -- including further clarifications, corrections and elaborations;
- undertaking all programmatic activities in the recognition that Article III of the Constitution calls the WCC *to deepen the fellowship* shared by member churches, and to strive with ecumenical partners *to broaden the fellowship and ensure the coherence of the ecumenical movement*;
- intensifying efforts to reshape our internal organizational patterns and to develop a relational style of work, *engaging the member churches and involving ecumenical partners more directly*;
- strengthening the *integrated style of work* which lies at the heart of the new structure, honouring the fact that the WCC has "incorporated" the work of the four predecessor bodies mentioned in Article III while discerning a clear focus for the activities of the WCC;
- assisting the shaping of *a new style of governance for the WCC*, taking into consideration the other constitutional changes accepted by the assembly as implications of the CUV policy document for the Council's governing structures.

The key tone and message of the CUV, which the assembly lifted up and affirmed, can be summarized in two phrases which echo and build upon the Amsterdam commitment to stay together. Not content simply to repeat the promise of 50 years ago, the assembly committed itself to "*move* together" and to "*build* together". How can this commitment be explained in relational and activity-based terms?

"We are committed to move together"

This affirmation insists that we cannot enter the 21st century expecting to do "business as usual". It invites member churches, ecumenical partners and the WCC staff to "move on" and to "move together", so that how we relate to each other and what we do together reflect a quality of fellowship which is both compelling and sustaining. Fellowship is not something to be taken for granted. Thus it is important to consider the style and methodology for cultivating relationships in this new phase in the life of the Council.

Two obvious priorities are exploring the theological potential of "togetherness" and seeking greater clarity about who our partners are and what relating to them requires. A principal task in this connection is certainly to unfold the potential of the declared commitment by practically all member churches and ecumenical partners to "move together", while taking into consideration difficulties arising from the present understanding of WCC "membership".

Focussing on the coherence of the one ecumenical movement expressed in the commitment to "move together", the report of Policy Reference Committee I recommends six areas for concentrated attention:

- strengthening relationships between the members of the fellowship (e.g. the Special Commission; the working style and decision- making processes of the governing bodies);
- nurturing, developing and sharpening established relationships with ecumenical partners (Christian World Communions, Regional Ecumenical Organizations, National Councils of Churches, ecumenical agencies), including their participation in shaping WCC policy and activities;
- maintaining and developing relationships with churches outside the WCC (e.g. the Roman Catholic Church and the work of the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the RCC);
- renewing or creating links with new ecumenical partners (e.g. Evangelical and Pentecostal churches; creation of a Joint Working Group with Pentecostal churches);
- reviewing relations with governments and international non-governmental partners, with special emphasis on developing forms of and instruments for effective advocacy;
- synthesizing all these efforts and seeking new models for expressing the reality of ecumenical relations, in order to serve the coherence of the ecumenical movement (e.g. the Forum).

All of this must be considered from the perspective of our internal structures:

- the linkages between the four clusters must be taken into account and the areas of shared responsibilities between the clusters must be identified, as is underscored throughout the Programme Guidelines Committee report (cf. pp. 5, 7, 13, 20f.);
- in the light of the concern for developing new methodologies and approaches for future activities (cf. especially the PGC report, pp.20f.), an intentional evaluation of the Padare experience (among others) is needed.

"Moving together" is not simply a "relational" issue, for it is in identifying common challenges and undertaking shared tasks that real movement takes place. We are thus

invited as an organization and as a fellowship to submit our relationships to the realm of common action and activity, and to assess or measure our actions in terms that put a premium on coherence and integrity.

"We must 'build together'"
The Programme Guidelines Committee report says that "with the renewed stress on the WCC as a fellowship of churches and as a servant of the one ecumenical movement, the emphasis for the coming seven years might be to use the concept of 'common' to determine its priorities -- common life in Christ, common witness and common concerns in the service of human need". Although the PGC report itself does not then go on to set priorities, it does attempt to achieve an integration and concentration of issues, as well as sharpening some issues for the post-assembly agenda (e.g. human sexuality).

The expectation is that all teams and clusters will contribute to explicating these priority issues. The new team approach should make it easier to develop forms of shared responsibilities.

The main challenge is not identifying priorities in the sense of eliminating items on a long "shopping list" of ecumenical concerns. Rather, it is to explore new ways – internally across teams and externally across churches and networks – for the WCC to respond to questions from member churches and to challenges from the world. On this point the Programme Guidelines Committee report reflects the expectation arising from the CUV discussion that what we do and how we do it will be integrally connected: "It is evident that a number of broad areas of concern merit intensified attention as the WCC seeks to 'serve the one ecumenical movement' in the years ahead. All these issues are many-faceted and at many points they are interconnected. Thus the identification of these issues as priorities should not be seen as directly implying a single programmatic activity. Rather, these are areas of activities in which the WCC must exemplify the integrated style of work which is central to its new internal structure".

III. An overarching conceptual framework

The Programme Guidelines Committee was convinced that the relational and activity-based work of the WCC must be rooted in the ethos and logic of the CUV, and that this ethos and logic become understandable and compelling as member churches and ecumenical partners actually engage themselves in the work we seek to do together. These convictions undergird two of the committee's recommendations:

1. That a conceptual framework for shaping and interpreting the agenda of the Council, the member churches and the one ecumenical movement over the next seven years be developed.

2. That methodologies for enhancing the style of work envisaged by the CUV and the new organizational structure be identified and developed, building on earlier models which have proved particularly successful (e.g. the Ecumenical Decade visits, BEM, PCR).

While the CUV document is a leading and formative text in its vision of the nature, calling and ethos of the ecumenical movement in the 21st century, it was never intended to be a management tool as such. A conceptual framework is thus needed to complement the CUV, giving focus to the Council's work, providing a common language for organizing, interpreting and evaluating it, making it possible to integrate the WCC's relational and issue-based activities, and putting a cross-team style in the mainstream of the Council's work rather than treating it something marginal and exotic.

Since the Programme Guidelines Committee could not design such a conceptual framework in the limited time available, the challenge of doing so remains an essential and urgent task. While staff discussions of what might constitute the primary foci for the Council's work are not concluded, some direction is emerging. Building on reflections begun by the general secretary, teams and clusters have discussed and debated three possible overarching foci: globalization, caring for life and being the church. A summary of the reflections so far follows.

Ecumenical response to globalization

Many voices before and during the assembly urged that globalization continue to be one of the overarching foci for integrating a number of specific activities of the WCC. Resisting the separation of the economic, political and religious and cultural dimensions of globalization, the Programme Guidelines Committee outlined a comprehensive approach linking the issues of governance and economic order to questions of ecology and even spirituality. All these themes, together with concerns about nonviolence, reconciliation and debt cancellation need to be brought together under the challenge of developing an integrated ecumenical response to globalization.

The growth of religious plurality is another theme intimately related to the process of globalization. Together with the discussions on our changing understanding of mission and evangelism (including proselytism), it should be considered as an important and discrete element of the ecumenical response to globalization. More than once the Programme Guidelines Committee report urges increased contacts with partners of other faiths, in order to explore together how to translate common commitments to human rights and dignity into a global framework of values to which all can subscribe.

While the process of globalization, especially through the worldwide reach of media, technology, consumerism and transnational corporations, is actively linking the world

under the image of one global village, it is also stimulating local and regional processes of economic and political organization and posing questions of national, ethnic, religious, gender and minority social identities. Consequently, any ecumenical response to globalization must simultaneously respond to the processes of regionalization and localization.

A comprehensive ecumenical response to globalization will involve building shared values based on a new global ethic of self-limitation, contributing to the restoration of balance in relationships and expressing solidarity with the masses of people who are excluded and denied the right to live their lives in dignity. This constitutes an enormous challenge to the ecumenical fellowship in the coming years. With the help of a network of advisors related to teams from all the clusters, there are new opportunities to link ecumenical discourse with newly emerging forms of social, economic, political, cultural and religious analysis.

Caring for life

Linked to the challenge of globalization is the need to place a strong emphasis on issues of spirituality, moral and ethical standards, life-styles, and our understanding of being human within the difference of genders, cultures, generations, abilities, etc. Here the WCC's earlier work on such themes as building communities with the marginalized and excluded, sustainability, a Theology of Life and life-centred ethic, a culture of peace and nonviolence, and upholding the rights and dignity of people needs to find focus. New attention to the spiritual dimension of caring for life is called for, particularly in ethical issues related to bio-technology, birth control, abortion and human sexuality. On this last area the Programme Guidelines Committee report makes a helpful linkage between Christian anthropology, biblical hermeneutics, ethics and culture. Such a comprehensive approach could provide a perspective for future WCC work on gender, beyond the Ecumenical Decade. Indeed, a distorted understanding of Christian anthropology is one of the sources which feed the culture of violence against women.

We are also beginning to realize how closely morality, culture and spirituality are intertwined. It is evident that we need to learn a great deal more about how the moral conscience is formed and transformed. Equally we need to understand better the dynamics of cultural transformation. What do we actually mean when we speak about building a culture of peace, dialogue, reconciliation and sharing? All this needs more focused attention.

Being church

The Programme Guidelines Committee report unfolds the theme of "inclusive community" as a way of giving prominence to work with marginalized groups – women, youth, children, indigenous people, people with disabilities. This is linked with the search

for "safe spaces" in which repentance, reparation, reconciliation and forgiveness can take place. But the scope of this might be enlarged even further. The paragraph in the report on "ecumenism of the heart" encourages us to open up the traditional focus on visible church unity in this direction (cf. p.14); and other pertinent related insights can be found in the paragraphs on "solidarity" (pp.12f.) and in much of what is said under the heading of globalization about the building of sustainable community.

The emphasis on inclusiveness is important in resisting powerful tendencies towards marginalization and exclusion, but a more dynamic and constructive focus is also needed which emphasizes renewal and building of community. David Jenkins 25 years ago spoke of "practical ecclesiology". In a similar way, we now need to deal with the very basic question of what it means to be church in the contemporary world. Our doctrinal concepts and canonical rules have developed under very different social and cultural conditions. The ecumenical discussion among women, young people and lay persons in general is essentially concerned about that renewal of the life of the churches which is needed to bring a message of hope and life into today's world. In this perspective, worship and spirituality become as important for practical ecclesiology as doctrinal convergences. The new profile of the laity and the attempts in the study on ecclesiology and ethics to spell out the specific character of *koinonia* as "moral community" must be further pursued. It is here, also, that the concern for evangelism should be placed, in the primary sense of building witnessing communities that become carriers of the message through their very lives.

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It is evident that these three integrating or overarching foci are intimately related to each other. They are not three separate tracks but three entry points into one single, complex task: understanding the context in which we live and the nature of the unity we seek for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

Since the assembly, the staff teams have been working with this formulation, sometimes elaborating and interpreting what these foci mean from the perspective of their own work, sometimes offering additional foci. It is often necessary at this stage for staff colleagues to remind themselves and one another that *all* teams relate to *all* the foci – or, to put it another way, that each team and every cross-team initiative is ultimately valued because it contributes to the overarching story.

This process of reflection will conclude at the Central Committee meeting in August-September. Out of all this it is hoped that there will emerge a conceptual framework – and with it "questions for the churches and the one ecumenical movement" such as the Programme Guidelines Committee envisaged (p.21) – which will ensure that the focus

of our ecumenical reflection and engagement is not a "Geneva agenda" but one which makes sense and gives coherence to the whole.

Conclusion

This report has sought to convey the main elements in a staff contribution towards building a post-assembly agenda. It is hoped that, taken together with the report of the general secretary, it will furnish the Executive Committee with the necessary material to discuss and direct staff on some of the following questions:

1. Does this adequately reflect the concerns of the assembly? What is missing and what needs to be added? What needs to be clarified or elaborated?

2. How do the explication given here of Article III of the Constitution and the interpretation of the commitment "moving together-building together" correspond with your own understanding of the CUV text?

3. What ecumenical concerns and themes qualify as overarching foci for the work of the WCC in the coming years? What criteria would you use for selecting foci?

BUDGET / FORECAST COMPARISON FOR THE YEAR 1999

	Operating Budget 1999	Operating Forecast 1999	Variation
Staff Numbers			
Core Staff sub-total	158.22	161.70	(3.48)
Non-Core sub-total	20.00	20.00	0.00
Overall FTE	178.22	181.70	(3.48)
Operating Budget			
Income			
33 Operating Designated Income			
Pledges	10,842,098	9,869,376	972,722
Remaining budgeted items	5,512,540	5,512,540	0
Total Operating Designated Income	16,354,638	15,381,916	972,722
32 Undesignated Income			
Pledges	3,505,250	3,347,850	157,400
Remaining budgeted items	3,466,470	3,466,470	0
Total Undeisgnated Income	6,971,720	6,814,320	157,400
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	**23,326,358**	**22,196,236**	**1,130,122**
35 Exchange Gains or Losses	0	0	0
36 Dividends and Interest	1,355,858	1,355,858	0
37 Production & Service Income	2,496,687	2,532,687	(36,000)
39 Miscellaneous	1,553,500	1,553,500	0
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	**5,406,045**	**5,442,045**	**(36,000)**
TOTAL INCOME	**28,732,403**	**27,638,281**	**1,094,122**

EXPENDITURE			
40 Grants	710,300	710,300	0
41 Professional Fees	829,820	829,820	0
42 Travel and Hospitality	1,993,800	1,993,800	0
43 Depreciation	781,402	781,402	0
44 Hire of Premises & Equipment	147,600	147,600	0
45 Post, Telephony, and Freight Charges	779,253	779,253	0
46 Office Costs	1,563,151	1,563,151	0
47 Publishing and Production Costs	841,730	841,730	0
48 Premises and Equipment (RR&M)	753,410	753,410	0
49 Financial Costs	354,085	354,085	0
50 Core Staff Costs	18,166,933	18,057,473	109,460
52 Non-Core Staff Costs	1,303,592	1,303,592	(0)
60 Public Information	1	1	0
63 Governance	(1)	(1)	0
66 Infrastructure Costs	1	1	0
71 Transfers to or from fund	4,200	4,200	0
73 Transfers to/(from) provisions	(75,000)	(75,000)	0
74 Transfer between teams or clusters	629,290	629,290	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**28,783,567**	**28,674,107**	**109,460**
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT FOR YEAR)	**(51,164)**	**(1,035,826)**	**984,662**
Balance Brought Forward (if applicable)	**0**		
Total Income as above	28,732,403	27,638,281	1,094,122
Total Expenditure as above	(28,783,567)	(28,674,107)	(109,460)
Budgeted closing balance	**(51,164)**	**(1,035,826)**	**984,662**